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marquee

Thursday July 11 1996

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The Guardian

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

46.602

Walkabout with Mandela

The great man cometh

G2 with European weather

Jaci Stephen on Gaza's royal wedding

Happy ever after?

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OnLine

Meet the hackers... and their enemies

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Ulster stands at the brink

David Sharrock and Owen Bowcott

LAST ditch efforts to break the Drumcree deadlock and avoid what church leaders fear could be a catastrophe in Northern Ireland were continuing overnight, as chaos intensified before tomorrow's big Protestant celebrations of the Battle of the Boyne.

Negotiations between the Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, and the leaders of the four main churches in Ireland went into a second round with the details of the discussions being kept a closely guarded secret.

However, there were genuine fears last night that the talks have come too late as thousands of Orangemen began to mass at Drumcree church, where their traditional parade has been blocked by riot police and troops for three days.

The Government, police, Orangemen and nationalists all believe the impasse must be resolved before Protestants begin their celebrations by lighting bonfires at midnight tonight, when passions will be too inflamed for reason to prevail.

On Tuesday, Belfast experienced its worst night of unrest since the start of the Troubles, according to the fire brigade, with a record 475 call-outs.

More Catholics were intimidated out of their homes, 338 plastic bullets were fired at rioters, and hundreds of roads were blocked.

The loyalist paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force appealed for calm and orderly protest and denounced the violence.

In a statement, the UVF denied any involvement in the murder of Catholic taxi driver Michael McGoldrick, who was shot dead on Sunday night.

The Catholic Primate of Ireland, Cardinal Cahal Daly, cancelled part of a foreign visit to return for the crisis talks.

"The potential of this is really catastrophic. You cannot exaggerate the seriousness of the situation. May God grant that we pull back from the brink," he said after the first meeting.

Mr Trimble said the meeting was worthwhile. "I very much hope it will contribute to a resolution of the matter," he said.

Despite the glimmer of hope, the overall picture last night was bleak, with nationalists on Portadown's disputed Garvaghy Road ruling out any compromise involving Orangemen parading past their homes.

After meeting Northern Ireland Office officials, the Garvaghy Residents' Coalition leader, Brendan Mac Clonagh said: "It's the chief constable who took the decision to reroute the march. That decision has been backed up by

Twelfth night

Tonight Belfast will be at a standstill as every one of the city's district lodges marches on the centre and holds a service outside the House of Orange.

A few hours later bonfires will be lit. Many will have effigies of John Major, the RUC Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Annesley, and the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, alongside the more traditional one of Gerry Adams.

Hundreds of loyalist youths will bring mob rule on to the streets, violence that the Orange Order has washed its hands of with platitudinous phrases.

Tomorrow is July 12, "The Twelfth" and the highpoint of the marching season. As soon as the 100,000 Orangemen complete their parade routes in each of Northern Ireland's six counties, they will clamber into buses and converge upon Drumcree.

David Sharrock, page 3
Reward for bombers, page 4

John Major. Is anyone suggesting the residents should overturn it?"

The Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, also backed the RUC chief constable, Sir Hugh Annesley, and rejected criticism of the police chief's decision to block the Orange parade route.

"The Prime Minister said he had taken the right decision," he said. "I think he has taken the right decision too."

"We have seen a return to the sort of violence everyone thought they had left behind 22 months ago. The situation is one of great danger."

A hundred extra Irish soldiers were drafted in to the southern side of the border last night amid fears that loyalists would bring their violent protests into the Republic.

In Drumcree the rumour mill was working at full capacity. Loyalists claimed some soldiers from the locally raised regiment, the Royal Irish, had "rebelled" and walked out of Portadown's main barracks, refusing to confront fellow Ulstermen.

The Reverend Ian Paisley claimed that, under pressure from the Irish government through the Anglo-Irish Security Agreement, the Government was planning a "massacre" of Orangemen at Drumcree.

The SDLP deputy leader, Seamus Mallon, had to be airlifted out of his home at Markethill, in south Armagh, where loyalists have sealed off the village.

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Card carrier... Orwell's union card identified him with the leftwing but anti-Soviet journal Tribune

Orwell offered writers' blacklist to anti-Soviet propaganda unit

Richard Norton-Taylor and Seumas Milne

GEORGE URWELL, the socialist author, offered to provide a secret Foreign Office propaganda unit linked to the intelligence services with names of writers and journalists he regarded as "crypto-communist" and "fellow-travellers" who could not be trusted, documents released yesterday at the Public Record Office reveal.

He made the offer in 1949, shortly before he died, to the covert Information Research Department, which used well-known writers and publishers — including Bertrand Russell, Stephen Spender and Arthur Koestler — to produce anti-communist material during the cold war. Documents also show that the IRD singled out articles from Tribune, the leftwing but then anti-Soviet paper, to back up its hidden crusade.

In March 1949 an IRD official, Celia Kirwan, visited Orwell at a sanatorium in Cranham, Gloucestershire, where he was suffering from tuberculosis. "I



Amazed: Michael Foot, a friend in the 1930s and 40s

discussed some aspects of our work with him in great confidence," she told her colleagues. "He was delighted to learn of them, and expressed his wholehearted and enthusiastic approval of our aims."

Although too ill to write himself, he gave the names of potential contributors. Early the following month, Orwell wrote to Kirwan offering to give her "a list of journalists and writers who in my opinion are crypto-communists, fellow-travellers or inclined that



Austin

way and should not be trusted... He said his notebook with the names was at his home in London. He insisted that the list was "strictly confidential" since it would be libellous to call somebody a "fellow-traveller."

The revelation is likely to shock many of Orwell's admirers, for whom he is a 20th century radical icon. The files released yesterday do not contain the list of names but a card placed next to Orwell's letter to Kirwan says that a docu-

ment has been withheld by the Foreign Office.

Bernard Crick, Orwell's biographer, confirmed yesterday that Orwell had kept a "notebook of suspects" containing 86 names. "Many were plausible, a few were far-fetched and unlikely," he said. Michael Foot, a friend of Orwell's in the 1930s and 1940s, said he found the letter "amazing".

"There's been a lot of argument about him deserting his socialism at the end of his life. I don't think that's true, but I'm very surprised he was dealing with the secret services in any form."

The papers show that the IRD promoted the foreign language publication of Animal Farm, Orwell's classic anti-communist allegory. "The idea is particularly good for Arabic in view of the fact that both pigs and dogs are unclean animals to Muslims," noted an embassy official in Cairo.

The unit feared communism in Saudi Arabia, notably among oil workers in Dhahran, the scene of last month's bombing of an American base.

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Cash-hit courts 'are not using' mental tests

Probation officers fear disturbed offenders escape treatment net

Duncan Campbell Crime Correspondent

PROBATION officers last night warned that increasing numbers of offenders who need psychiatric assessment and care are being denied it to save costs.

Their concerns follow a recent move by court officers who have launched a national campaign to draw attention to the problems caused by funding reductions in the judicial system.

Both their organisations last night called for an urgent debate on the problem.

Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National association of Probation Officers said: "The courts are under intense pressure to save on costs. We are aware of a number of instances where adjournments have been refused to avoid an additional costly hearing. We feared that a tragedy of some kind was bound to happen."

If a magistrate orders a psychiatric assessment, there has to be a further court hearing, with its high costs, and the crown and defence lawyers, who may be on legal aid, are required to attend.

In addition, a psychiatric report may take up to eight weeks to complete, thus slowing down the judicial process as well as adding to the costs.

The serious nature of the problem has been heightened by the case of Horrett Campbell, aged 32, who was arrested on Tuesday night in a block of flats near St Luke's School, Wolverhampton.

His arrest followed a huge police hunt after the attack at the school, by a man with a machete, in which four adults and three children were injured.

Yesterday it emerged that when Campbell appeared before Wolverhampton magistrates in November last year on a charge of s17 and various motoring offences, he was reported in court to be in need of psychiatric assessment. The court heard that he had earlier received a police caution for arson after setting fire to his own car.

It was reported that "voices" had whispered and talked to Campbell for some time, giving him instructions. The hearing of such voices is a classic indicator of psychiatric illness.

The court heard that there were signs of growing medical problems and a need for Campbell to be seen by a psychiatrist. The court did not adjourn the case for psychiatric assessment but sentenced him to immediate custody.

Mr Fletcher said last night that he was not surprised that the psychiatric assessment had been declined by magistrates. "It is in the public interest that this is debated now," he added. "My worry is that if something is not done immediately, it could happen again."

Because of the spiralling court and legal aid costs, magistrates may feel under pressure not to order expensive extra services if they believe that such a course is not merited.

The Association of Magistrates' Officers, which represents court officers, recently launched a campaign to draw the public's attention to the problems caused by funding reductions.

The association says it is concerned that justice is not being served by the increasing economic pressures on the courts to cut costs.

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Danger this time is that the atmosphere has become so inflamed that all reason has already fled

Fears of fall into chaos as 100,000 march

David Shearlock
Ireland Correspondent

THE road to hell or compromise beckons. Tonight, as bonfires are lit for the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne, Northern Ireland will know which route it is to follow.

The choice is put starkly by the increasingly militant Orangemen: unless their Portadown brethren are allowed to complete their journey home from a church service at Drumcree down a road which passes nationalist estates, Ulster will be plunged into violence the likes of which it has not seen in 25 years.

The Orange Order's strategy of stretching the security forces to their limits has developed since Sunday, with scores of impromptu parades held across Northern Ireland at a few hours' notice. Tonight Belfast will be at a standstill as all the city's district lodges march on the centre and hold a service outside the House of Orange.

A few hours later bonfires will be lit. Many will have effigies of John Major, the RUC chief constable, Sir Hugh Annesley, and the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, alongside the more traditional one of Gerry Adams. And hundreds of loyalist youths will bring mob rule to the streets, violence that the Orange Order has washed its hands of with platitudinous phrases.

Tomorrow is July 12, "The Twelfth" and the highlight of the marching season. As soon as the 100,000 Orangemen complete their parade routes in each of Northern Ireland's six counties, they will clamber into buses and converge upon Drumcree.

Before that there will have been riots on the Ormeau Road in Belfast, another flash-point where Orangemen have been convicted for weeks that their parades would be allowed through by the RUC against the wishes of local Catholics. And there will be major conflicts in Newry and Londonderry, predominantly Catholic areas.

What happens next is anybody's guess, but so far this week a Catholic taxi driver has been murdered, Catholic families have been forced from their homes in largely Protestant areas, schools have been set alight, gunfire has echoed across Belfast, millions of pounds worth of damage has been caused, and the image of a land and people emerging into the light has been shattered.

The Government and the RUC have two options. The first, initiated by Sir Hugh, seems to be to face down the Orangemen and their associates with loyalist violence. Security experts who favour this approach argue that street protest and unrest tend to go in waves with a particular lifespan. All that is required is to hold the line and within perhaps another week the storm will have blown itself out, and the extremists will be left isolated.

On the other side, the sceptics are fearful that such a strategy misreads the mood. Sir Hugh's predecessor, Sir John Harnock, "faced down" the Orangemen of Portadown in 1986, at the height of Unionist anger over the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

A loyalist was killed by a plastic bullet. Senior members of the Ulster Freedom Fighters and the Ulster Volunteer Force point to those events as the spark which revived their organisations. The difference this time is that officially the loyalist ceasefire is still in place. Ulster is at a very low point in the curve on the violence chart, and just how bad it could get cannot be predicted accurately.

There is little ground for optimism, but there is some. This time last year, in the same atmosphere of anger but with far less violence, a deal was struck at the 11th hour. We are at the same point again and the same straws are in the wind.

The danger this time is that the atmosphere has become so inflamed that all reason has already fled. Which is why it is so difficult to see how it will have to be done before nightfall today, before the bonfires are lit.



The scene in east Belfast yesterday morning, following the city's worst night of unrest of the whole of the Troubles, according to the Fire Brigade

Dangerous games at the barbed wire barricade

Owen Bowcott reviews the jousting at trial of strength on Ulster's sharp divide

PLANTED amid triple rows of barbed wire, the Orange Order placards declare: "The RUC never put as much effort into stopping the IRA."

In the shallow valley, below Drumcree Church and the edge of the Catholic Ballyoran estate opposite, there has been little room for manoeuvre.

With as many as 10,000, sporting sashes and carrying lodge banners, the scene has resembled a medieval battle field: part siege, part ritual trial of strength.

Yesterday Orange Order supporters brought up the battering ram, a massive earth mover. Police in body armour sprang up from the grassy hedges where they had been dozing.

By night, lodge marshals have patrolled the overgrown stream which divides the two sides, urging young hotheads to keep their distance. Their pleas have often been ignored.

On Tuesday night sections of the crowd used ropes to pull apart the barbed wire and briefly broke through. Yesterday soldiers from the Grenadier Guards were reinforcing their defences.

Girl survivor may hold clue to deaths of mother and sister

John Mullin

DETECTIVES investigating the deaths of a mother and her daughter near an idyllic Kent village were last night maintaining a bedside vigil over the woman's second, critically injured daughter.

They are hoping that nine-year-old Josephine Russell may be able to provide vital clues about the deaths of her 45-year-old mother, Lin Russell, and her six-year-old sister Megan. Their bodies were discovered early yesterday yards from the body of their father in a scrubland near Chilkenbury, about 10 miles from Canterbury.

Josephine was found alive, but with serious head injuries, and was tonight fighting for her life at a London hospital. Although it was not confirmed officially, it appeared likely that the inquiry was destined to become a murder investigation.

Police would not confirm how mother and daughter died. But no weapon was found at the scene and detectives are working on the theory that an assailant unknown to the family struck without warning.

Officially, police said they would have to wait until the cause of the deaths and examinations being undertaken last night before they would know for sure how Mrs Russell and her daughter died.

A police spokeswoman said Josephine could have a key role to play. "Clearly she will be the main witness. Police are hoping to speak to her, though that will depend on her injuries. This girl is probably our greatest hope of finding out what happened."

Mrs Russell left the family home in the village of Nonington to pick up her children from school in nearby Goodnestone at around 4pm on Tuesday.

Staff at the school confirmed that she arrived to collect the girls, and the three were seen to set off.

The Russell family had moved down from north Kent a year earlier. Sheena Russell, aged 48, was working at the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology at Kent University in Canterbury.

Dr Russell, described by his boss Michael Walkley as one of the nicest men he knew, returned home in his black Subaru shortly after seven. He was worried and went to look for his family.

He called the police at 10.45pm and two hours later detectives, led by Chief Inspector David Stevens, made their bloody discovery.

Yesterday Margaret Frier, aged 62, whose 10-year-old grandson Nicholas is a classmate of Josephine, said she watched every day from her kitchen window as Mrs Russell walked her daughters home.

'I don't think anti-semitism is a strong card to play in anti-Russian propaganda'

This is the text of George Orwell's letter to Celia Kravon of Whitehall's Secret Information Research Department.

DID suggest DARCY GILLY (Manchester Guardian) didn't P. There is also a man called COLLERTON (expert on the Moscow trials) who I'd be contacted through the Observer.

is of any value, give you a list of journalists and writers who in my opinion are crypto-communists, fellow-travellers or inclined that way and should not be trusted as propagandists. But for that I shall have to send for a notebook which I have at home, and I'd give you such a list if it is strictly confidential.

Just one idea occurred to me for propaganda not abroad but in this country. A friend of mine in Stockholm tells me that as the Swedes didn't make films of their own, they see a lot of German and Russian films, and some of the Russians, which of course would not normally reach this country, are unbelievably scurrilous anti-British propaganda. He referred especially to a historical film about the Crimean war. As the Swedes can get hold of these films I suppose we can, might it not be a good idea to have showings of some of them in this country?

propaganda. The USSR must in practice be somewhat anti-semitic, as it is opposed both to Zionism within its own borders and on the other hand to the liberalism and internationalism of the non-Zionist Jews, but a polyglot state of that kind can never be officially anti-semitic. In the Nazi manner, just as the British Empire cannot if you try to tie up Communism with anti-semitism. It is always possible in reply to point to people like Kaganovich, or Anna Funder, or to the large number of Jews in the Communist parties everywhere. I also think it is bad policy to try to curry favour with your enemies. The Zionists Jews everywhere hate us and regard Britain as the enemy, more even than Germany. Of course this is based on misunderstanding, but as long as it is so I do not think we do ourselves any good by denouncing anti-semitism in other nations.

I am sorry I can't write a better letter, but I really have felt so lousy the last few days. Perhaps a bit later I'll get some ideas.

Orwell offered blacklist

continued from page 1

The IRD arranged the distribution of Tribune to British missions abroad. Officials noted: "[It] combines the results of exposure of communists and its methods with the consistent championship of those objectives which leaving sympathisers normally support."

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MEMBERSHIP REWARDS

Cards

Anti-terror chief: 'We are aiming at people in the motor trade, from the questionable to the downright criminal'

£1m reward to find IRA bombers

Police seek garage where Ford lorry loaded with 1½ tonnes of explosives for Manchester blast

David Ward

POLICE investigating last month's bomb in Manchester yesterday appealed for information from people "at the dodgy end" of the motor trade.

Commander John Grieve, head of the Metropolitan police anti-terrorist branch, announced a £1 million reward for details of where the Ford Cargo lorry used by the IRA was loaded with 1½ tonnes of explosives after leaving Peterborough.

"What we are really aiming at are people at the question-

able end of the motor trade, the questionable end-moving towards the downright criminal," he said in Manchester. "My interest at the moment is not in whether people are avoiding paying VAT on cash transactions. We are investigating terrorist offences."

The reward would also be available to "straight" informants, but Mr Grieve said he thought anyone with information would have come forward already.

Colin Phillips, assistant chief constable of Greater Manchester police, revealed details of the getaway car used on June 15 by the bombers — one of whom is thought to have had a particularly

long nose. He also said more than 6,000 people had responded to previous appeals for information.

"But we haven't had a lot on information about vehicle compounds, large garages, where the lorry may have been loaded with explosives. This was a substantial amount of explosives, and would take some time to load."

"We also believe that the lorry may have stopped 20 or 30 minutes outside Manchester to make final preparations before the short drive to Corporation Street. They would not risk a long journey in the final preparations for the explosion."

The getaway car, a maroon Ford Granada Mark 3 hatchback, was parked in Cathedral Street, a few hundred yards from where the bomb van was abandoned by two men outside the Marks & Spencer store. Police issued

photographs of how the men may have looked wearing capes, hooded sweatshirts, baseball caps, and sunglasses.

The two ran to the Granada and climbed in as a third man, described as sun-tanned and having dark bushy hair, moved from the driving wheel to the passenger seat.

"What we want now are any sightings of that vehicle as it left Manchester," said Mr Phillips. "The car may have also travelled up from Peterborough with the bomb lorry. Or it may have been in Manchester the week before."

Cmdr Grieve said the IRA operation was the 11th in a series from 1992 involving lorries or vans. "I think there is a comparatively small group of people planning, directing and controlling these incidents. They select from a bigger pool of people who undertake different roles in the commission of the crime."



A broken mannequin lies in rubble still to be cleared from a battered building in Manchester. PHOTOGRAPH DON MCPHEE



City Council architect Bob King amid the ruins left by the IRA bomb. PHOTOGRAPH DON MCPHEE

Damage beyond worst fears

Peter Hetherington

DAMAGE to the heart of Manchester, devastated by an IRA bomb, is likely to be far more extensive than initial estimates suggested.

Four weeks after the blast, which wrecked or badly damaged a quarter of a square mile of the city centre, council architects have calculated 1,300 buildings have been damaged. Some could be demolished while others will have to be rebuilt.

Manchester city council's architect, Bob King, who is in charge of building safety, said yesterday: "The more you peel away at the damage the greater the scale of the devastation. Every time you penetrate further it is clear things are much worse than we imagined."

While surveyors can assess the damage and the likely repair — or demolition — programme for relatively new buildings, concern is growing for the stability of two landmarks, the Royal Exchange, a former cotton exchange turned theatre and the Corn Exchange, a market and office complex. Both Grade II listed buildings, topped by large domes, physically moved during the bombing. Although outwardly secure, they have had internal damage and expert advice is being sought. Marks & Spencer, whose store took the full force from the 1½ tonne bomb, yesterday announced it was temporarily re-locating to two sites in the city.

Chairman Sir Richard Greenbury said: "We are totally committed to the rebuilding of the centre of Manchester." But the company is still assessing whether it needs to demolish its devastated store and start from scratch.

Almost a quarter of the undercover Arndale shopping centre reopened for business last weekend, while further areas are likely to re-open over the next few months. But about half the centre, opposite Marks & Spencer, is so badly damaged that its fate hangs in the balance.

Much will depend on an international architectural competition, to be formally launched next week, for the re-design of a 59 acre inner core.

Show goes on as theatre blasted off stage sets up mobile home

David Ward

ATHEATRE company whose last production was suspended inside a building that took the full force of the explosion, has set up a mobile auditorium at Upper Campfield Market, a theatre space created in 1994.

The venue has only 400 seats, compared with 740 in

the main theatre, a shortfall which prompts a cash crisis. "We expected to be on a healthy financial footing this year," lamented Brahm Murray, one of the theatre's artistic directors. "Now we are looking at a deficit of £600,000."

It could be seven months before the company can return to its base and reopen its workshops, offices, bars and café, while still using Upper Campfield as its venue.

It is confident that its bid for £13 million of lottery money towards an already planned £17 million refurbishment and a studio

theatre will be successful. "With luck, we should reopen the auditorium in February 1998," said Mr Murray.

Meanwhile 50 staff have been laid off. But Mr Murray says that, thanks to an offer of office and rehearsal space from BBC North, the company's production of "The Philadelphia Story" will open almost on schedule.

After the blast, when it looked as if the entire building and auditorium might be lost, "people were in shock," he said. "There was a feeling of fear, impotence and rage." The news has got better.

The theatre itself appears unscathed, but no one knows the extent of the damage to the building or the fate of £150,000 worth of recently installed equipment.

However, the show has gone on. Last week the company staged eight performances of *Kindle Wakes* in the BBC's Studio A with minimal props and sets, basic sound and lighting.

Before the bomb, the production was proving successful, said actor Colin Procter. Afterwards "there was a bit of the Blitz spirit as we rehearsed."

Germany tightens UK beef ban

Ian Traynor in Bonn and Stephen Bates in Brussels

GERMANY yesterday maintained its hard-line stance on the BSE crisis when Chancellor Helmut Kohl's cabinet voted to impose an indefinite ban on British beef imports and to maintain a ban on beef products.

Despite the commission's decision last month to lift the ban on gelatine, tallow, and

bull semen, Germany reiterated its determination to ignore the relaxation.

The decision supersedes the German ban decreed in March which is due to expire at the end of September, and still needs to be endorsed by the German parliament's upper house next week. But the upper house represents Germany's 16 federal states, which are more militant on the beef ban than the Bonn government.

The German government ordered its 16 federal states to

tighten monitoring of the beef trade, urged consumers to buy only certified German beef, and asked the European Commission to investigate alleged illegal exports.

In Brussels, Franz Fischer, the agriculture commissioner, said drastic measures were needed to reduce beef production across Europe to relieve the surplus of meat mounting towards record levels in storage.

The amount of beef held is over 600,000 tonnes and commission officials suggested

that Europe may cut back on prices paid to farmers for some cattle in order to contain the rising mountain of uneaten meat.

In a speech to the European Parliament's economic and social committee, Mr Fischer said: "The chaos unleashed by the BSE crisis has been so precipitous and of such magnitude that it is unparalleled in the history of the common agriculture policy."

"There is a very real danger of an unprecedented level of beef stocks overhanging

and depressing the market, with obvious implications for beef producers' incomes and the stability of the beef market in general."

It is estimated that consumption has declined by between 11 and 14 per cent across Europe since the crisis arose in March.

One of the British government's main hopes for selling beef outside the EU collapsed yesterday as South Africa denied ministers' claims that it wanted to import the meat for its own markets.

Car death student cleared

AJAPANESE student was acquitted yesterday of causing the death of a friend who was killed when a drunk went wrong during a drunken drive home.

Tatsuya Yoshimura, aged 23, was driving his Volkswagen Beetle when fellow student Thomas Pickett, 21, fell to his death after losing his grip while "surfing" from the car window.

A jury at Oxford crown court acquitted Yoshimura of causing death by dangerous driving and of causing death by driving without due care

and attention after consuming excess alcohol.

Yoshimura, who is studying at Oxford Brookes university, admitted driving with excess alcohol, and was hanged from driving for one year and ordered to pay a £300 fine.

Monica Bader, a student, had told the jury how the friends had been to the student union bar before driving to a nightclub.

on to a handle inside. Yoshimura was concentrating on the driving. It was all really quick, maybe 10 to 20 seconds. "He took hold of my hand and turned around and his head was upside down. His way was close to the road. All of a sudden he fell out."

He died from massive head injuries.

Yoshimura told the court: "Tom was a grown up. I was busy driving. The upper part of his body was out of the car. I never imagined he would put the rest of his body out of the window."

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DUNBLANE: last day of inquiry hears that licensing officers' attitudes were coloured by 'official' gun culture, Erend Clouston reports

Police 'not to blame for massacre'

THE Cullen inquiry into the Dunblane massacre ended yesterday with a forceful defence of the police who failed to revoke Thomas Hamilton's firearms licence.

The role of the Central Scotland force is expected to be questioned, along with the revealed general looseness of the regulations surrounding gun ownership, by the report which Lord Cullen will present to Parliament within the next three months.

The 28-day inquiry concluded with a criticism of the "tacit sympathy" towards the gun culture displayed by the authorities, and with the question of Thomas Hamilton's paedophilia still hanging in the air. Despite 171 witnesses unrestrained by libel laws, hard evidence linking the mass murderer to child abuse remained meagre.

Lord Cullen is expected also to make recommendations about the vetting of adults working with children and the security of school playgrounds — an issue highlighted again by this week's events in Wolverhampton. As he wound up the public hearing in Stirling's Albert Halls, Lord Cullen said he hoped to produce a report which would "measure up to the responsibility which is entrusted to me".

Representatives of the families of the 16 children killed and those wounded by Hamilton have concentrated on the willingness of the Central



Thomas Hamilton: 'paedophilia not proved'

What they said

"Good reasons for revocation or refusal of his licence abounded. Very sadly, they were ignored, and but for the firearms department's culpable failure to remove these weapons, this terrible tragedy would not have happened" — Colin Campbell QC, for the families, to Lord Cullen

"These nutters usually kill themselves anyway, they don't want to be wounded by firearms officers" — retired police firearms instructor John Wilson discussing Hungerford gunman Michael Ryan with Thomas Hamilton

"He is scheming, devious, deceitful and not to be trusted" — Detective Sergeant Paul Hughes in 1991 memo to the deputy chief constable, Douglas McMuirdo, unsuccessfully requesting revocation of Hamilton's gun licence

"I don't think anybody could have done anything which would have weeded this individual out" — Mr McMuirdo to the inquiry

Scotland force to renew Hamilton's gun licence three times, despite a concurrent series of police investigations into his sports clubs and summer camps.

A damning 1991 report from the force's child protection unit alleging Hamilton was "scheming, devious, deceitful and not to be trusted" has been used by the families' lawyers to accuse the force's firearms department of "culpable failure".

Lord Cullen is also certain to scrutinise regulations which allowed Hamilton to buy 1,000 bullets a day and store a further 1,500 for each of his four handguns. He fired 105 rounds in the gym at Dunblane primary before turning a gun on himself. The inquiry has heard that the average pistol shooting competition requires 30 bullets.

Hamilton's eligibility to possess firearms has been repeatedly queried in the context of Home Office guidance that licence holders should not be of "intemperate habits or unsound mind". A succession of witnesses, including the shadowy Scottish secretary, George Robertson, have testified that they had "gut feelings" about Hamilton.



Playtime... a boy runs in the memorial garden laid out on the site of the Dunblane primary school gym where the massacre took place

Schools urged to focus on low achieving boys

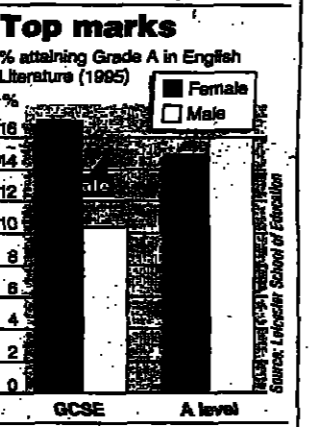
John Carroll Education Editor

SCHOOL inspectors yesterday called for a programme of positive action to combat the persistent under-achievement of boys at almost every level of the education system.

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) published striking evidence from its routine inspection of thousands of co-educational schools showing the performance gap between girls and boys is greater in successful schools which are efficiently managed, clearly and achieve good overall standards.

Senior inspectors said the better schools helped both boys and girls improve their exam results, but the relative superiority of the girls increased as the overall standard of the school was raised. "The implication was the gender gap would widen if politicians and teachers succeeded in their aim of lifting school performance."

The report by Ofsted and the Equal Opportunities Commission stressed girls outperform boys at ages 7, 11 and 14 in national curriculum assessments in English. Achievements in maths and science are broadly similar. "Girls are more successful than boys at every level in GCSE, with more achieving at least one grade G and more passing in at least five subjects at grade C or above."



Ofsted found one secondary school in five was "weak in meeting the particular needs of one or the other sex". Problems included underperformance by one sex in lessons or exams, inappropriate attention to gender issues in books and resources material and lack of preparation for opportunities in working life.

Cliff Gould, head of Ofsted's secondary school team, said more should be done to increase boys' rapport with their schools.

Positive action for boys could include single-sex groupings for English, foreign languages and other subjects in which they underperformed. Greater use of information technology for English teaching could help to stimulate boys' enthusiasm and some schools were experimenting in mentoring schemes to give boys better role models.

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Srebrenica's new Serbs stake their claim

As UN teams dig for those killed when the 'safe haven' fell a year ago, voters register under laws that could shake off the Muslims' last hold on their old home. **Julian Borger reports**

QUIETLY and mundanely, the final act in the ethnic cleansing of Srebrenica is being carried out in this desolate Bosnian mountain town, exactly a year after Bosnian Serb forces brushed aside its fragile United Nations shield and slaughtered thousands of its Muslim inhabitants.

All that remains of Srebrenica's former status as an internationally designated "safe area" are a few black and white UN signs hanging at skewed angles from the walls of a factory, and the faded orange white and blue colours of the Dutch Unprofor peacekeepers whose presence

was meant to deter the attack which came last July 11.

The international community has sent new colours and new acronyms in their place. Officials from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), backed by Nato troops from the Implementation Force (IFOR) patrol the streets in their white and olive-green vehicles, monitoring preparations for the September elections.

In the town hall, a line of Serb refugees stand in silence along an unlit corridor, waiting to register. As their turn came, each voter ticked a box renouncing their remaining link with their former districts and requesting the

right to vote in their new home: Srebrenica.

It takes about 10 minutes per person, but each completed form institutionalises the process of ethnic cleansing. If all goes according to the plans of the Bosnian Serb leadership, Srebrenica will complete its bloody transition from a majority Muslim town to a purely Serb stronghold with Serb leaders on September 14, election day.

Bozica Pasalic, a 40-year-old Serb from Tuzla, insisted registering to vote in Srebrenica was an act of liberation: "I feel free. I feel like I did before the war, at home," she said.

She had been discriminated against as a Serb by Tuzla's

Muslim-led authorities, especially in the distribution of humanitarian aid, she said. She virtually starved and bought her way across the front line in 1994.

"I would rather die than go back to Tuzla and live under Muslim rule," she said.

Through voter registration, which ends on July 15, Serbs are laying claim to all the other former Muslim towns in Serb-held territory — Zepa, Foca, Visegrad, Prijedor and Banja Luka — hardening the ethnic walls of the Serb republic.

The Muslim-led government, which fought to keep Bosnia whole, has argued bitterly with the OSCE's voting regulations which give displaced people the right to choose where to vote. But it agreed to the principle last December when it signed the Dayton peace agreement.

Most Muslim refugees from

Srebrenica are fighting to keep at least a symbolic hold on their town. Radenka Jarić, an electoral official in the Sarajevo suburb of Ilidza, said "90 per cent" of refugees from Srebrenica coming to register were asking for absentee ballots, which will allow them to vote for the Srebrenica authorities without taking the perilous journey

together [with the Serbs] before and we can again as long as all the war criminals are handed over. Living together is possible."

Mr Bekić said he hoped the election of Muslim municipal leaders would somehow speed his return. John Fawcett, an analyst from the International Crisis Group independent think-tank, said

are receding. Momčilo Svetinović, head of the Srebrenica branch of the ruling Serb Democratic Party (SDS), is confident of 7,000 Serb votes, which he thinks will be enough to beat off the Muslim refugee vote.

There are 31,000 Muslim refugees from Srebrenica, but many are children. According to preliminary OSCE figures, Muslim refugees have been slower to register. By late Tuesday only 11,000 had asked for absentee ballots for the whole country.

Most of Srebrenica's adult male population — up to 8,000 men — are missing, presumed dead. This week a UN forensics team has been exhuming some of their remains from a mass grave at Cerška, 15 miles north-west of Srebrenica. Yesterday they were brushing dirt off layers of bodies buried on a hill.

Mr Svetinović dismisses ac-

counts of mass executions. "We'll see how many of those on the missing list turn up to vote," he laughs.

Neither do the Serb voters queuing to register believe the previous owners of their new homes were massacred.

"These stories all come from the Muslim side," Ms Pasalic said. "Serbs were never genocidal."

Today in Tuzla, on the first anniversary of Srebrenica's fall, 6,000 Muslim women survivors plan to unveil a huge banner embroidered with the names of their missing men.

In Srebrenica, the SDS is planning to celebrate the town's "liberation", with a rally and a special promotion of a video by Miroslav Jević, a leading Serb ideologue of ethnic cleansing.

Mr Svetinović surveyed the Serb voters outside his door with satisfaction. "It will be an occasion for victors," he said.

'We lived together [with the Serbs] before and we can again as long as all the war criminals are handed over'



Czech police arrested about 50 demonstrators at the Temelin nuclear power station in the southern Czech Republic yesterday on the fourth day of a protest against the Soviet-designed plant which is still being built. PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN GALLUP

Yeltsin's economic programme veers towards Communists

David Hearst in Moscow

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin has begun steering Russia on the economic course advocated by his Communist opponents, promising to keep the factories open and to stimulate production, even at the cost of higher inflation. He said his reform programme would continue, but with "serious corrections".

The change of tack was heralded by an interview given by the president's chief economic adviser, Alexander Litvshin, who said low inflation should not be the only aim of economic policy and warned Russia not to expect a sudden rush of investment for "six to 10 months".

With a budget deficit already hovering on the limits set by the International Monetary Fund, and acknowledged difficulties in meeting the summer wages bill, Russia could well be on the point of reneging on pledges it gave the IMF when a \$10.2 billion (\$6.6 billion) loan began. An IMF monitoring team is due to arrive in Moscow soon.

Mr Yeltsin said: "Factories must have orders, people

must have work and we must ensure a rise in every Russian family's living standards. I see this as my main task."

Rumours circulated all day about who Mr Yeltsin would appoint as the new economic chief. The first whisper was that arch critic of the prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, the liberal economist Grigori Yavlinsky. Then came leaks that Viktor Ilyushin, the president's senior aide, would be named.

Mr Ilyushin is a grey cardinal who has shunned publicity, wielding substantial influence over Mr Yeltsin. Like the president, he is from Yekaterinburg, has strong links with the military industrial complex and is an unabashed supporter of Mr Yeltsin's sacked chief bodyguard, General Alexander Korzhakov.

Yesterday, Mr Ilyushin hinted that a job should be found for Gen Korzhakov, who was dismissed after a scandal when two senior Yeltsin campaigners were arrested carrying cash out of the White House.

Although still looking shaky on his legs, Mr Yeltsin has not left the capital for a

rest cure in his Black Sea dacha in Sochi, determined to stamp his authority on his squabbling courtiers. He yesterday named Mr Chernomyrdin as the head of his new government, but the real balance of forces is unclear.

Mr Chernomyrdin, who represents the oil and gas lobby, has clashed publicly with Mr Yeltsin's new security adviser, General Alexander Lebed. Yesterday it was announced that the president had approved Gen Lebed's proposals for a security council with beefed-up powers, although no details were given.

Gen Lebed had demanded control over economic policy, but was yesterday put in charge of a drive to fight crime in the capital. A statement said Mr Yeltsin had issued a decree allowing for emergency measures.

Mr Chernomyrdin's appointment could be a stop-gap measure. He is clearly associated with the present economic policy, which a majority in Russia blames for the industrial standstill.

If, as expected, the federal budget crisis gets worse in September, Mr Chernomyrdin could easily be sacrificed.

Mr Chernomyrdin — already put on the defensive by the collapse this week of Mr Yeltsin's truce in Chechnya — was wrong-footed when Interfax said an arrest warrant had been issued for the Chechen rebel leader, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, with whom Mr Yeltsin negotiated the truce.

The report, quoting Major Igor Melnikov, head of the Russian press centre in Chechnya, came as Russian aircraft pounded two villages, Gekhi and Mekhety, the headquarters of Mr Yandarbiyev. At least 20 civilians in Mekhety were killed.

Asked who was in control, Mr Chernomyrdin said: "There has been no failure in the presidential plan for the peaceful settlement of the crisis in the Chechen republic — the federal forces have brought to their senses some of the rebels and their leaders who have gone too far."

Maj Melnikov's statement was withdrawn under pressure from Moscow.

Gen Lebed is due to launch his own peace initiative in Chechnya and has pledged to negotiate with anyone interested in a ceasefire.

Seveso's green legacy

John Hooper in Rome

A PARK was opened yesterday, not far from Milan. It extends over about 16 square miles, of which more than three-quarters is planted with shrubs and saplings.

The regional authorities in Lombardy, who have spent nine years creating the park, expect it to turn gradually from a garden into a wood and from a wood into a dense forest.

They said yesterday that it was already home to hedgehogs, rabbits, moles and foxes. In time it may be difficult to persuade the schoolchildren on guided tours that the Bosco delle Querce, or Oak Tree Wood, outside Seveso, marks the site of a disaster that revolutionised people's thinking.

Exactly 20 years ago an explosion at a plant owned by an affiliate of the Swiss pharmaceuticals giant,

Roche, caused a cloud of poisonous dioxin to float over one of the most densely populated areas in Europe.

Nobody died at Seveso, but more than 600 people suffered skin damage, farm animals were killed and land was rendered unusable. Its effects may have been dwarfed by those of the chemical disaster at Bhopal in India eight years later, which cost more than 2,000 lives. But, like Bhopal, Seveso marked a turning point in environmental awareness and attitudes towards the chemicals industry.

"A new culture of safety developed," Roche spokesman said in Zurich yesterday.

In 1982 the European Union issued a law — the so-called Seveso directive — which compelled firms producing hazardous substances to build safer plants and to introduce effective accident manage-

ment systems. Ironically, the revised version of the directive has yet to reach Italy's statute books.

Its provisions were put into a decree which has been repeatedly reissued, but never been turned into law. An Italian government decree is valid for only 60 days, after which it must be renewed.

The new environment minister, Edo Ronchi, marked the anniversary by issuing a statement imploring legislators to convert the measure into a bill.

Roche has paid out 300 million Swiss francs (£153 million) as redress for personal injury and environmental damage arising from the disaster.

But controversy remains. During clearance of the site, 41 drums of dioxin disappeared. Reports have them being either incinerated in Switzerland or dumped at La Spezia on Italy's west coast. Prosecutors are investigating.

More attacks on graves

Paul Webster in Paris

AFTER the desecration of a second British first world war cemetery in less than a week, police in northern France said they believed a group of young vandals might be responsible.

Visitors to Bouvay cemetery in the Pas-de-Calais department yesterday found about 50 headstones either smashed or damaged. On Sunday, 112 British war graves were vandalised at the Aval Wood cemetery in the adjoining Nord department near Lille.

Yesterday, three tombstones in the Canadian Orange Hill cemetery near Bouvay were also found damaged.

Police investigating the Aval Wood case met the French veterans' affairs minister, Pierre Pasquini, yesterday to discuss possible links.

The veterans' ministry is also considering as a factor the publicity given to the commemoration of the 1916 Battle of the Somme.

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Big bucks spur Canada's broncos

Sponsorship and prizes drive the Calgary Stampede, writes Paul Koring in Ottawa

THE shining skyscrapers of Calgary stand largely empty this week as businesses shut down while the oil-rich city indulges in 10 days of romantic Wild West nostalgia punctuated by bleary-eyed pancake breakfasts.

The annual Stampede and Exhibition bills itself as The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth, but the bull-wrestling, bronco-busting, calf-roping and chuck-wagon races are only part of the phenomenon.

Even though it rained for the first time in 65 years on the opening-day parade, more than 250,000 people jammed the route. For along with the hoopla and the sateen, the string ties and the Steeles, the Stampede is about big money.

It will pour a record 127 million Canadian dollars (\$50 million) into the city this year, Barry Biggar, vice-president of the convention and visitors' bureau, predicts.

Some cowgirls, however, feel they are not getting their due at what Carolyn Vietor, president of the Women's Professional Rodeo Association, calls "the last bastion of chauvinism".

In the early frontier shows, women competed in bronco-busting and bull-riding events. But they have lately been relegated to "ladies" barrel-racing — a still-grueling event demanding superb horsemanship and lightning reflexes. This year, the event has finally been given equal status — at least in terms of the C\$50,000 prize money — with the main men's events.

Florence La Due would be pleased. She was the trick roping and rider married to Guy Weadick, the cowboy from the United States widely credited with founding the Stampede in 1912, as the "biggest frontier show" on earth.

Hyperbole remains an essential part of it: the thickest steaks, the biggest prizes,

the fanciest boots (ostrich skin at C\$550 a pair).

Seldom is heard a discouraging word. When Chrysler Canada backed out as the main sponsor this year, General Motors was quick to step in.

Last year, the deaths of three horses — one after a horrific crash in a chuck-wagon race — produced brief howls from animal welfare activists. The races, where four wagons, each pulled by four horses, career at break-neck speed around a half-mile track, is the Stampede's highlight and spectacular crashes are not infrequent. Two of Alberta's top chuck drivers have been killed in the past three years.

In light of the danger, most national sponsors eschew the springtime auction when bidders can elect to put their logo on the wagons. But that does not stop stalwart locals from paying up to C\$120,000 to sponsor a top driver.

Yet the animal welfare lobby has been drowned by the boisterous celebration that is the unabashed heart of the Stampede.



Parting company... A rider is thrown by a bucking bronco in the bareback event at the Calgary Stampede in Alberta. PHOTOGRAPH BY PATRICK PRICE

Hero's return for mighty dieter

Mark Tran in New York

IT TOOK just 10 men to help Michael Hebranko from the ambulance yesterday as one of the world's fattest men returned to his Brooklyn home and a hero's welcome.

But then, when he left two months ago, a forklift truck was needed to lift his 71-stone bulk from the house.

Neighbours turned out in force to cheer Mr Hebranko, who lost over 29 stones during a stay in St Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Centre. Doctors said that Mr Hebranko, aged 46, had been just a few days from death in May when 20 men and the forklift prised him from the house. Part of a wall was bulldozed because Mr Hebranko could not fit through the door. He was then taken to hospital on a special vehicle normally used to carry small whales.

The new-look Mr Hebranko,

who has vowed to stay trim, was accompanied by his wife, Madeline.

"I didn't want to fall in front of everybody, but once I got through the front door, I felt like Alice in Wonderland," he said. "It felt good to be home."

Mr Hebranko, who no longer needs an oxygen tank, set a world record when he lost 50 stones in the late 1990s, but he then put them — and more — back on again. He is now on a 1,400 calorie-a-day diet and will see a physiotherapist twice a week.

Angelo Cantone, who used to deliver \$200-worth of high-fat lunches to Mr Hebranko every week, presented him with a case of diet soft drinks. "I will not serve him any more," he said.

Fitness guru Richard Simmons, who helped Mr Hebranko lose weight before, said: "Now, hopefully, this man can have some dignity."

Russia endangers arms pact

Ian Black, Diplomatic Editor

NEGOTIATIONS on controlling the global export of weapons and sensitive dual-use technology are heading for failure with Russia refusing to bow to Western pressure and disclose information about sales.

In a session billed as a crucial test for the re-elected Boris Yeltsin, officials from 31 countries meet in Vienna today to discuss the replacement for the cold war era Coordinating Committee on Export Controls (Coccom).

Talks on the new mechanism — nicknamed "son of Coccom" and known formally as the Wassenaar Arrangement — began in April but foundered almost immediately when Russia refused to accept rules agreed by others.

Now, after an interlude for the presidential elections, Moscow is signalling that it will not budge. "We expected the West not to treat Russia as a country which represents

a threat," a Russian diplomat said. "They should not put limitations on our dealings in dual-use products. There is no change."

Wassenaar was established last year to exchange information about the transfer of "sensitive dual-use goods and technologies" including machine tools, computers and cryptographic equipment.

It aims to prevent the sort of destabilising build-up of arms and hi-tech equipment which led to the Gulf war. It brings together European Union countries, the United States and Russia, which account for more than 90 per cent of global weapons sales.

But the main stumbling block is about when an exporting country must notify other members of its sales. All except Russia back a "no undercutting without consultation" rule for dual-use goods.

This would mean that if Russia wanted to sell dual-use items to a country that Britain had refused to export to, Russia would have to inform all other members of the

organisation when it issued the export licence, giving them the chance to dissuade Russia.

But Russia is insisting that notification of exports be delayed until goods have been delivered — making a commercial and political nonsense of the mechanism.

"Most people are fairly pessimistic about the odds because there's no sign the Russians have changed their position," a US diplomat said. "If we don't get them in we'll have to re-evaluate. Do we keep trying to flog a dead horse or cut our losses and move on to something else?"

Arms control groups like Safeworld say that even if Russia cannot accept the regulations, Nato countries should take the lead and build Russian confidence by implementing tight controls among themselves.

Russia's response has confirmed Western fears that it wants to sell weapons and technology without restrictions. Mr Yeltsin's poor health and the rise of the hardliner Alex-

ander Lebed are thought to bode ill for future co-operation.

The Soviet Union exported arms worth an average of \$14 billion a year (\$3 billion), but cut badly to Western rivals after the end of the cold war but is set to sell \$4.5 billion worth this year.

Experts have warned that without Russian co-operation Wassenaar will be meaningless while other problems — focused on Western attempts to monopolise conventional arms sales — threaten the future of the structure.

Russia was allowed to join only after bowing to US pressure not to sell sensitive equipment to Iran, one of the four "pariah states" all Wassenaar members have pledged to shun. The others are Iraq, Libya and North Korea.

But concentration on banning sales to the pariahs means some countries on the US list of countries sponsoring terrorism, such as Cuba, Syria and Sudan, could be seen as acceptable customers.

First rule of bull fiesta: run away

New York Times in Pamplona

AFTER last year's going to death of an American during Pamplona's annual run with the bulls, the city has published a glossy pamphlet in English, German and French revealing the secrets of how to get through the race alive.

"Do not run towards the bulls."

"Do not challenge, touch, or otherwise distract the bulls. This could be fatal."

"Do not be overconfident. Retire before you get into difficulties."

The 16-point checklist arrived just in time for the week-long San Fermin festival, which began on Sunday. Yesterday one Spaniard was gored and slight injured in other ways. (One man was also found dead of an alcohol overdose.)

"A lot of people who come here are ignorant about running with the bulls," said the city's deputy mayor, Joaquin Escal, and added that some thought the event was "less risky than jogging".

The colour pamphlet, 25,000 copies of which have been distributed, may help correct that view. The cover advises participants to "Run Safely!" and features an image of two bulls about to trample and gore several runners.

City officials have become uneasy in recent years as more foreigners have crowded into the town for the festival and tested their luck in the daily morning ritual of racing

with the bulls through the cobblestone streets to the bull-fighting ring, a spectacle made famous by Ernest Hemingway in his 1926 novel *The Sun Also Rises*.

Seventy years later, Pamplona's population of 185,000 doubles on peak festival days and the number of runners can reach 3,000. A city spokesman, Santiago Gómez, said Pamplona hoped to avoid more accidents that might lead to the run being suspended.

The advice in the pamphlet is based on common faults among runners identified by city officials.

It might seem obvious not to run towards the bulls, but it often happens as participants seek a better position at the start of the race.

Runners are also advised not to carry anything, including canyons and babies. Last year, course marshals had to remove two women carrying small children.

There have been hundreds of gorings over the years, but the death of a 22-year-old man from Chicago last year added urgency to publishing the pamphlet. He was the first person killed in 15 years.

Pamplona officials say the American made a mistake when he fell by getting up and starting to run again, instead of staying still.

The pamphlet also identifies a problem some veteran runners consider nearly as dangerous as the bulls. "Do not push or elbow the other runners," it says. But compliance this week seemed patchy, with many runners shoving each other, mainly to get away from the bulls.

Germany Netherlands

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China and US smooth over issues still dividing them

Martin Walker in Washington

THE United States national security adviser, Anthony Lake, yesterday ended a visit to China during which officials from the two countries appear to have avoided tackling their big disagreements.

Both countries had an interest in smoothing over the crisis which came to a head last spring, when the US sent two aircraft carrier task forces to cruise off Taiwan as China "tested" missiles in the Taiwan Strait.

Both also have political reasons for restoring the appearance of good relations. President Clinton wants no new crisis off Taiwan before the November election. The Chinese leader, Jiang Zemin, is seeking a summit meeting with Mr Clinton before next year's Communist Party Congress at which he hopes to seal his succession to the ailing Deng Xiaoping.

White House sources confirmed yesterday that such a summit has been agreed in principle for Beijing next year, assuming that Mr Clinton is re-elected, and all goes smoothly with China's takeover of Hong Kong.

"Common interests between China and the United States are far more numerous than our differences," said China's foreign ministry spokesman, Cui Tiankai. "There is no reason to be pessimistic about the future of bilateral relations."

Despite the warm words, the two countries have in effect agreed to differ on several key issues, but to keep talking. China repeated that it was determined to re-unite with Taiwan "by force if necessary", and Mr Lake said this would have "dire consequences".

Mr Lake met privately with Mr Jiang. He discussed Taiwan with the defence minister, Chi Haotian, and trade and economic co-operation with the prime minister, Li Peng. US officials said they would try to institutionalise relations.

Mr Lake's visit followed a last-minute concession by the Beijing government last month, agreeing to close pirate factories to avert a trade war.

Climbdown by Washington on militia men bomb theory

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

THE United States government has been forced to admit that 12 militia men arrested in Arizona last week were not federal targets — to blow up federal buildings as had earlier been suggested.

The admission, in a Phoenix court where the 12 are pleading for bail, will fuel the extremist views of America's rightwing conspiracy theorists who already believe Washington has concealed the role of informants in the bomb explosion that destroyed Oklahoma City's federal building in April last year killing 169 people.

In that case, militia groups and their supporters say, the government employed an agent provocateur, who has disappeared, to help the bombing suspect, Timothy McVeigh, blow up the building.

A judge in Phoenix was deciding yesterday whether to keep the 12 in custody. Earlier, he heard that seven alleged militia targets — including the office of the FBI federal tax authorities, the Phoenix police and the national guard headquarters — were only discussed and not selected as real targets.

The judge has admonished the government for handling out "press packs" to the media to support its case that the Viper 12 are dangerous suspects who should be kept in custody. He has also forced prosecutors to abandon attempts to show a video of the militia men using explosives in the desert in 1994.

"There was no plot," said their defence counsel, Deborah Williams. "The only thing we've seen blown up is a hunk of dirt."

Prosecutor Frederick Battista countered: "They had the tape, they had the training and they had the capability... Their conduct is extremely dangerous."

Mr Battista said the group had an armory of weapons and explosives, including 70 shotguns and rifles, a machine-gun they called "Shirley", and other automatic weapons.

The Vipers are said to be one of 12 anti-government militias in Arizona.

News in brief

- Niger clashes over elections**
Police and opposition supporters clashed in Niger's capital Niamey yesterday, after the announcement that the military ruler, General Ibrahim Bare Maïnassara, had won the election with 52.23 per cent of the vote, witnesses said.
Gen Maïnassara replaced the independent national electoral commission on Monday and put his opponents under house arrest. — Reuters.
- Rebels arrested**
The Mexican army has arrested four suspected members of the Popular Revolutionary Army, a leftwing group operating in Guerrero state. — Reuters.
- Original drama**
A New Zealand woman who tied up her partner on the pretext of bondage sex and poured boiling water on his genitals has denied sex cops the idea from the British television drama *Band of Gold*, police said yesterday. She has been charged with attempted murder for trying to stab him. — Reuters.
- Coma rape charge**
A sacked nurse's aide in New York state has been charged with raping a woman in a 10-year coma who later gave birth to a premature baby, prosecutors said. — AP.
- Land mine plea**
The Nicaraguan village of La Explosión is asking the army to remove land mines that make surrounding farmland unusable, leading to malnutrition, a local newspaper said. — Reuters.
- Masked warning**
Authorities in the Russian city of Volgograd plan to distribute some 50,000 masks to residents to help them survive possible accidents at local chemical plants, reports said yesterday. — AP.
- Fish bowl museum**
China is to build an \$8 million underwater museum to preserve access to ancient fish carvings to be submerged by the Three Gorges Dam. — AP.

A more nursery-conscious film would have made more mileage out of Esmeralda's goat sidekick.
Jonathan Romney

Diary
Matthew Norman

GALA dinner to raise election funds for New Labour takes place at the Savoy Hotel tonight — and given that Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Lord Ardenborough are all speaking, £450 per seat seems a bargain. Even so, in an unwonted fit of paranoia, Labour is secretive — "It's a private event, and we're not allowed to give out details," says someone called Natalie at Walworth Road. However, we have learned the identity of a company which, by taking an entire table, has put several thousand quid into New Labour's election fund. It is the cigarette giant Philip Morris, maker of Marlboro and payer of a vast annual retainer for "advice" to Margaret Thatcher. Some may think it a bit odd that New Labour is happy to take cash from such a firm, but I feel sure Mr Blair will have satisfied himself that the penny comes from the Marlboro Lights brand, and none from full-strength red Marlboros. After all, he is deeply concerned about the health angle. Indeed, it is barely a fortnight since Mr Blair pledged to ban all tobacco advertising if returned to power.

GERMAN factory worker Peter Dittert has set a modern European record by failing with his tenth suicide attempt. This time, he was unexpectedly discovered after swallowing 60 sleeping pills. Previous efforts included rat poison (he vomited it up), aspirin (his stomach jammed), and a hair-drier in the bath (the fuse blew). Philosophers are currently undecided as to whether Herr Dittert is the luckiest or unluckiest man in the world.

VALERIE, secretary to John Fraser MA (Oxon), MPhil, calls. Have we received a fax from Mr Michael Winner, she asks. Indeed we have. "We are in a state of great excitement," it begins. "The tape arrived this morning." The old goat refers to the tape of the chat show on which the Diary claims he said "my mother was suing me for ten years" — something Michael denies. If proved wrong, he will be making a large donation to charity, and treating us to a lavish dinner at a restaurant of our choice. Michael is busy organising a Directors Guild Dinner (apparently, he once made films) but will be viewing the tape shortly.

DURING lunch, an answering-machine message is left by Terry Major-Ball, who asks us to ring. "Oh dear, I can't remember why I called you in the first place," says Terry, when we return his call. "Except to talk to your charming self, of course." And upon this mannerly note, we say our farewells.

I AM intrigued to notice self-parody creeping into the Mail on Sunday column of the venerable Sir John Major. Contemplating the news that French tennis player Mary Pierce has agreed to pay for her domineering father's cancer operation, Sir John mentions that Mr Pierce is known "the dad from hell", and advises Mary, once the op is over, to "tell this particular dad to go back to hell". How nice to see Sir John poking fun at his own reputation as a parent. His daughter Penny, the telly presenter, once told Lynn Barber: "We don't talk a lot... When I was a child I sometimes didn't want to be alone with him because he unnerved me... He's a very dominating man." This is Sir John's more delightful for its shock value: in that same Barber interview, Penny Junior said: "He doesn't have much of a sense of humour about himself."

TRAFFIC problems have forced the councilors of Broome, an Australian outback town, into decisive action. From now on, flashing red tail lights will be hung from the town's population of 200. "It can be quite eerie," says council clerk Greg Powell. "You can be there after sunset, and the next minute you're surrounded by camels." Whether camels are more or less dangerous than Marlboros is a question Mr Powell probably feels is best left to Mr Tony Blair.



A case of ministers behaving badly

Commentary
Hugo Young

WHEN governments behave badly, they usually find some mask to hide behind. The death of decency comes by a thousand cuts. The Major government has done mean things and foolish things, but has not yet cast a whole class into permanent destitution. Even when Thatcherism was riding high behind a 140-majority, it shrank from positive cruelty towards people into whose eyes, one by one, the state had stared.

On Monday, however, this is what Major and his colleagues will instruct the Commons to do. For a ministerial not lacking in posers on the high moral ground, wicked is the word that comes to mind.

The deed is already almost done. The Asylum and Immigration Bill turns the screw, fiercely diminishing the life-chances of refugees who come to Britain: the latest in a succession of laws born out of a misbegotten coupling between the real necessity to

curtail fraudulent entry and the political compulsion to demonstrate toughness against foreigners of every kind. The Bill will be through next week, unless a few legislators are emboldened to earn their money by the novel adventure of investigating their consciences.

For the Government, curbing legal rights through the Bill was not enough. Alongside, it wrote new regulations withdrawing social security entitlements from almost everybody seeking to use the law. Peter Lilley, fulfilling a promise made to the supreme forum of dispassionate judgment, the Conservative Party Conference, decreed an assault on people he depicted as benefit scroungers, whether these were torture victims from Iraq, persecuted escapees from Nigeria, or families in fear of their lives in Iran, Yugoslavia, Sudan, wherever.

Since February, when it came into force, this new rule is estimated to have left about 8,000 people, at various stages of their asylum applications, in total penury. However, the decision which the Commons rubber stamped was challenged by two other branches of the constitution. Court of Appeal judges said it was illegal, because it did by fiat what needed, if done at all, to be done by proper law. And House of Lords politicians voted last week to unpick one

small part of the law which the Government, in swift response to the court, is trying to bring in.

This startlingly direct assertion of parliamentary sovereignty is quite proper. It meets the judges' legal points. But it doesn't meet their moral argument. Lord Justice Simon Brown was very strong. The policy, he said, was to force asylum-seekers "either to abandon their claims to refugee status or alternatively to maintain them as best they can in a state of utter destitution". This, he thought, was a situation "no civilised nation can tolerate". Whether this was a judicial or a human utterance seems beside the point. It lays down a challenge, which could have been framed by anyone, that the makers of this monster must confront.

The House of Lords, in a minor way, made them do so. It passed an amendment to what ministers propose, saying that asylum-seekers should have three days after arriving in Britain to make their application. What ministers propose is that they must do so the instant they arrive or sacrifice all entitlement to benefits. Only asylum-seekers who, however confused and ignorant and fearful and credulous, have the nerve to say to the first authority-figure they come across in this strange land

that they wish to exercise their legal rights, will be kept alive by the state while they await the Home Office verdict. All other applicants are to be presumed fraudulent, and therefore insupportable.

To the government of Peter Lilley and Ann Widdecombe, the Home Office hatcher on the case, even a three-day grace period is unacceptable. It is to obliterate this modest change, which justly leaves the judges' indictment unanswered, that the Commons is being requisitioned for action on Monday. The arguments for doing so repay study. Ministers admit that some of these asylum-seekers turn out to have a good and legal case. Between 1992 and 1995, one-third of them were either recognised as full refugees or granted "exceptional leave to remain". In other words, they

won their appeals. It often took 12 months, sometimes 18, for the process to grind through. The new rules mean that people in a similar situation in future, who are forbidden to work, will no longer have even modified social support. Soup kitchens and church halls, until the court intervened, were trying to fill the gap.

When the court is formally overturned, licensed penury and calculated starvation will re-appear as the weapons of official choice to nullify such minimal legal rights as asylum-seekers have been left with. How do ministers justify

Democracy — just by picking up the phone



Charles Leadbitter

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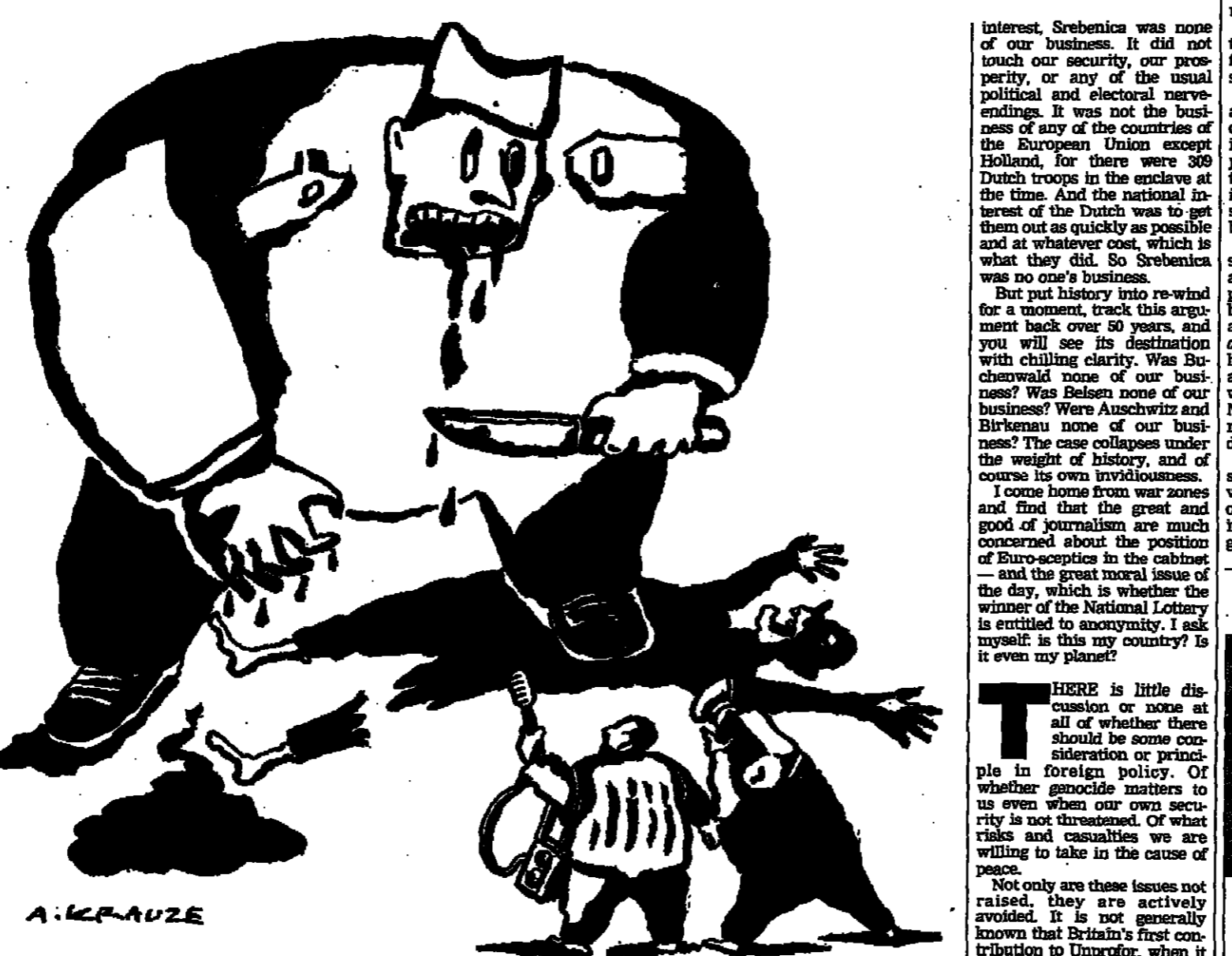
The operator will help you find out which minister is responsible for out-of-town development policy and what his telephone numbers are; will tell you what legislation governs out-of-town development and other relevant publications, such as select-committee reports; and can also highlight similar cases and the MPs involved.

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Of course a lot of inquiries will be simpler — for instance, finding out how many times the word "equality" appears in New Labour, New Life For Britain. But we can't do the impossible: we can't tell you what Tony Blair means by stakeholding.

On the first anniversary of the fall of Srebrenica **Martin Bell** launches a passionate attack on British policy in Bosnia that put national interest before principle

Conflict of interest



A. KRAUZE

I AM NOT a crusading or campaigning journalist, and indeed I tend to mistrust such journalists, on the grounds that they so often find what they are looking for and disregard the rest. But I do know what happens when politics and diplomacy fail. For I have been there.

I had not expected it — the first war and genocide in Europe, since the last war and genocide in Europe. I will concede that this war changed me. It has changed my way of doing things and seeing things, and my way of working. I was brought up in the old and honourable tradition of balanced, dispassionate, objective journalism. I would now call it bystander journalism. I would move from war zones to war zones without being greatly affected by any of them. And clearly I have been affected by the Bosnian war, enough personally to wish to see an end to it. I am not sure about objectivity anymore. What I believe in now is what I prefer to call the journalism of attachment; a journalism that cares as well as knows.

For all that we are accused, in television, of distorting and exaggerating and wrenching out of context, in the Bosnian war we tended to not show things quite as we found them. Sometimes courage failed. Certainly mine did. I believe we should show more than we do

and take out less than we do on the grounds of taste. For war is a bad taste business. And in the real world people do not, as they do in television, expire gracefully out of sight.

Bosnia has shown that there is no middle course, no getting half in. And there is a strong case for staying out. No country willingly risks the lives of its young soldiers in a cause which is not their own and in a country of which they know little. But in Bosnia, for the first three years of war, we — not just the British, but many countries who could have helped but didn't — neither stayed out of it or got into it effectively.

We came up with limited, symbolic measures, which may have prolonged the conflict. One was using UN troops to escort aid to the victims of the war rather than to prevent the aggression. This was to pass food in through the window while the murderer stood at the door. Another was the plan for UN designated safe areas without the troops and the mandates which would have made them safe.

War is diplomacy's failure. And the Bosnian war has left me with the conviction that a foreign policy based only on considerations of national interest, and not at all of principle, is not only immoral but inefficient. It cannot cope with the challenges of the new

world disorder. What we do have is an interesting — and extremely British — discrepancy between what we do and what we say. What we do is to make a difference. The British people are a moral people with a profound sense of right and wrong. They hold coffee mornings and jumble sales to raise money for the victims of the Bosnian war. They take refugees into their homes. They drive convoys of aid into the war zones. Such people tend to be dismissed by my army friends as "do-gooders from Baghdad".

And the British, more than any other nation in Bosnia, have been doers of good. They included an Essex fireman who drove an old fire engine into Sarajevo across the airport, a free firezone for the Serbs. It took five bullets but it got through. They included my friend Larry Hollingsworth, the Father Christmas look-alike who ran the UN relief agency in Sarajevo and later in Central Bosnia, who stood up to the bandit-commanders at road blocks, and saved thousands of lives; Mark Cook, the former British army officer, who raised a million pounds to rebuild orphanages at Livno in Croatia and Sarajevo; the ODA, the "good works" department of the Foreign Office, under the leadership of Baroness Chalker. Now look at the pronouncements of officialdom, public and private, and

you will find very different signals.

Malcolm Rifkind, in his first policy speech on becoming foreign secretary, quoted with approval Lord Palmerston's dictum that "the furtherance of British interests ought to be the sole object of a British foreign secretary." In which case we may perhaps wonder, whatever happened to British principles? Don't we have them anymore? And if we don't, what kind of people are we?

Let me make an example. The example is Srebrenica, the Muslim enclave of 50,000 people which fell to the Serbs a year ago. It was supposed to be a UN protected safe area. As the Serbs overran it, some 800 Muslim men slipped out or fought their way out through Serb lines to Tuzla. The women and children were bussed out or trucked out or finally walked to safety, though some of them died on the way. But 3,000 to 5,000 men were separated from them and disappeared. We now know that most of these were killed by the Serbs in a series of cold-blooded, organised mass executions. It was the greatest war crime in Europe since 1945. In the words of the UN war crimes tribunal, "these were scenes from hell, written on the darkest pages of human history."

Now here's the point. On a strict calculation of national

interest, Srebrenica was none of our business. It did not touch our security, our prosperity, or any of the usual political and electoral nerve-endings. It was not the business of any of the countries of the European Union except Holland, where there were 309 Dutch troops in the enclave at the time. And the national interest of the Dutch was to get them out as quickly as possible and at whatever cost, which is what they did. So Srebrenica was no one's business.

But put history into re-wind for a moment, track this argument back over 50 years, and you will see its destination with chilling clarity. Was Buchenwald none of our business? Was Belsen none of our business? Were the camps at Birkenau none of our business? The case collapses under the weight of history, and of course its own invidiousness.

I come home from war zones and find that the great and good of journalism are much concerned about the position of Euro-sceptics in the cabinet — and the great moral issue of the day, which is whether the winner of the National Lottery is entitled to anonymity. I ask myself: is this my country? Is it even my planet?

THERE is little discussion or none at all of whether there should be some consideration of principle in foreign policy. Or whether genocide matters to us even when our own security is not threatened. Of what risks and casualties we are willing to take in the cause of peace.

Not only are these issues not raised, they are actively avoided. It is not generally known that Britain's first contribution to Unprofor, when it was formed to keep the peace and police the ceasefire in Croatia, was made for two months so that it should not become an issue in the general election of April 1992.

What was this contribution? Was it armour, artillery, combat infantry? No, it was a field hospital which would save the lives and contribute to the safety of other UN troops. No one was willing to stand up and make the case even for that. Of the quality and character of that decision: judge for yourself.

The question that this raised for me, and which has been rattling around in my head ever since, is: what kind of people are we?

What we are, perhaps, is an untidy people. Or a people who have lost their leadership within themselves, who no longer comes from the quarters it used to. This was the case with the British soldiers who served under a blue helmet in Bosnia. It was the case with the aid workers who served in Bosnia. It was even the case, sometimes, with members of that unfashionable underclass, the journalists, who served in Bosnia. What else were we to do? Pass by on the other side, wring our hands, and declare it was none of our business? It was all of our business. And it still is.

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This is an edited version of a speech delivered last night at Chichester Cathedral

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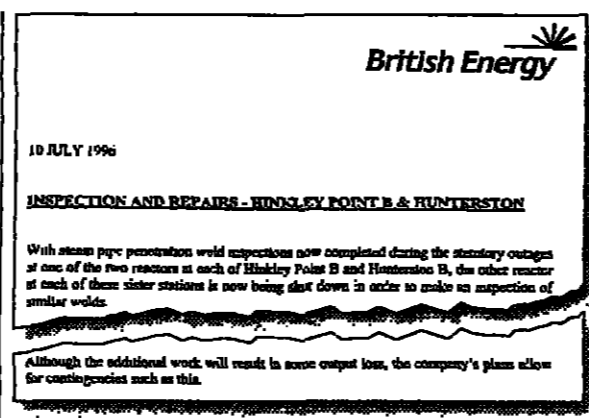
Nuclear offer closes . . . and so do two reactors

Paul Brown, Chris Barrie and Lisa Buckingham

TWO nuclear reactors were shut down for emergency safety inspections last night just an hour after the deadline for the public offer of shares in British Energy closed.

The reactors were taken on the advice of a committee of experts concerned about cracks found in welds. Two stations are affected, Hinkley Point B in Somerset and Hunterston in Scotland, two of the best performing advanced gas cooled reactors.

about the decision to shut the stations for 24 hours but said nothing while it checked the financial implications. A spokeswoman said that the expected losses fell within the contingency financial planning of the company and would not affect the flotation.

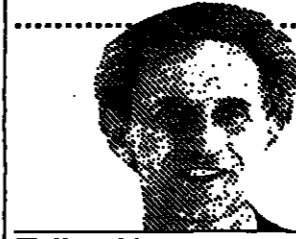


Major investors were launched last year when Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator,

launched a price-capping review which destabilised the second tranche of the privatisation of the power generators, leaving many large investors nursing hefty paper losses.

Notebook

Luring Koreans is money well spent



Edited by Alex Brummer

THERE will no doubt be much quibbling in the coming days about the sweeteners which the Welsh Development Agency and others have found it necessary to offer to attract £1.7 billion of investment from the Korean group LG to Newport, South Wales.

It would certainly be unsatisfactory if one part of the UK found itself having to offer more assistance than otherwise would have been the case because it was competing against another part of the country.

Nevertheless, the estimated £150 million to £200 million of government funds used in bringing modern, technology-based industries to Britain is well spent. With the exception, perhaps, of the pharmaceutical and aerospace industries — where the importance of research and development and investment has been recognised — manufacturing has largely been demagnetised and opportunities for renewal of the industrial base missed.

Britain has, however, become a magnet for direct inward investment. A combination of factors, including the abolition of exchange controls, more flexible labour markets and an attractive cultural background together with low tax rates, have given the UK a competitive edge over its EU partners. While the collateral benefits have often been exaggerated — it is unlikely that the multiplier effect will be quite as grand as trumpeted by the Government — the Lucky Gopher jobs would otherwise have gone elsewhere.

We were among those who were highly critical when BAe sold off Britain's last remaining mass car producer, Rover, to BMW. However, there are serious questions as to whether, under British ownership, Rover would have found the £1 billion it needed for investment.

Despite Conservative claims to the contrary, LG almost certainly would have come to the UK whoever was in power: multinational corporations do not make long-term investment decisions on the basis of any one administration. Having won this for Britain, John Major has a duty to spell out how the deal was given. Secrecy will only attract the unwanted attention of the EU's regulatory machinery.

Dollar switch

AFTER an upward movement on the scale of that seen in the US dollar in the last 15 months it should come as no surprise that the business community is showing some anxiety. The current bout of nerves, which has seen the dollar slip by around

1 per cent against the currencies of the US's major trading partners, was sparked when Donald Fites, who heads the US-Japan Business Council, argued that the gains of the dollar against the yen had become "worrysome and may require government action".

Since the dollar began its advance against the yen in April 1995 after touching a post-second world war low of yen 79.75, it has climbed 39 per cent, passing through a new high of yen 111 on Monday. This was bound to blunt US export competitiveness and there has been some recent indications that the US balance of trade is starting to suffer, as Japan embarks on an uncharacteristically robust expansion. A Federal Reserve governor dismissed the value of a dollar policy, noting that in the US economy (unlike that of the UK) exports represent just 10 per cent of total GDP.

Be that as it may, the US is on the verge of its most turbulent political season with the arrival of the party conventions and the autumn election campaign and the White House will be anxious not to alienate business interests, particularly if they begin to argue that a strong dollar could cost jobs in the US. It will not be astonishing if the Clinton administration's firm defence of a strong greenback starts to fade.

Nuclear outrage

OVER half a million small investors have every reason to be furious this morning. Yesterday, in yet another apparent last-minute surge of interest, they brushed aside concerns about the privatisation of nuclear generator British Energy — and lodged 520,000 applications for shares. Today, they read that two nuclear reactors have been shut down.

The company, already the butt of institutional scepticism, appears to have withheld news of the shutdown until just 60 minutes after the deadline for retail applications. British Energy may insist that the £7 million estimated loss arising from the shutdowns is within its contingency planning but nobody, least of all the company itself, has any real idea of the problem's true extent and BE simply refuses to discuss the reliability of other reactors.

All this when the Government has all but admitted it cannot yet place a reliable value on BE's worth and investors have been persuaded to buy shares on the basis of a guaranteed early dividend from an industry that has never made a penny of genuine profit.

Barings fails to dent overseas earnings peak

Sarah Ryle

THE collapse of Barings Bank last year failed to prevent the City earning Britain a record £20.4 billion overseas, according to the latest analysis of financial services activity by British Invisibles, which was published yesterday.

Barings' £27 million losses through its Singapore subsidiary helped push direct investment earnings by banks deeper into the red, at a negative £1.8 billion against £0.5 billion in 1994.

The losses were not compensated for in the "City Table" by the £650 million invested by new Dutch owner ING because the money was included elsewhere in the current account by officials.

But regardless of this, the crisis did not stop the total earnings reaching a level which was double that of a decade ago.

Foreign earnings

Overseas earnings of UK financial institutions (£ billion)



Source: British Invisibles

activities including banking, insurance, maritime, institutional investors and securities dealers.

"These results reflect well on London's continuing role as a leading international financial centre. They also show that the financial sector represents a crucial component of the UK's international competitiveness."

British Invisibles, which publishes a breakdown of the financial sector's earnings annually, said the £8.7 billion surplus on services in last year's UK current account was almost entirely due to earnings by the private financial sector. Total private sector net earnings were £20.7 billion.

Within the £20.4 billion, services continued to make up the bulk, accounting for £12.2 billion (60 per cent) of the surplus, and investment income the remaining 40 per cent.

Branson recruits Blair to protest at BA's proposed US alliance

Keith Harper and David Hancock

RICHARD Branson has met the Labour leader, Tony Blair, to complain about the proposed alliance between British Airways and American Airlines, which would soak up 70 per cent of traffic between the United States and Britain.

Mr Blair has promised an immediate examination of Mr Branson's complaints and the expectation last night in Westminster was that Mr Blair would almost certainly back a reference of the alliance to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

If Labour backs Mr Branson, the pressure on the Government to refer the issue to the MMC would increase. A decision by Ian Lang, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, is expected later this month.

Major backs South African leader's CBI charm offensive



Doing the business . . . John Major joins Nelson Mandela and entourage in London yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ANGLIS

Mandela woos business leaders

President appeals for cash to boost economic recovery, Sarah Ryle and David Beresford, in Johannesburg, report

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela yesterday won immediate backing from John Major and the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, for his campaign to persuade British business to invest in the South African economic recovery.

The Prime Minister said: "South Africa has a substantial investment in Britain. And Britain is the biggest investor in South Africa. I am very keen that British business should continue to lead the way."

Addressing a Confederation of British Industry conference in London, Mr Major said South Africa could look to Britain as a "channel for investment" via the City as well "as a friend in Europe".

The level of foreign interest in South Africa since majority rule has been phenomenal. A capital outflow of R2.2 billion in 1991, R3.2 billion in 1992 and R15 billion in 1993 has been reversed to an inflow of nearly R22 billion last year. But most of it is "hot money" — speculative short-term investments.

South Africa still has to persuade the international community that there are grounds for the confidence needed to attract the direct investment which Mr Mandela is now desperately wooing.

Expressing admiration for these achievements, Mr Clarke said bringing government borrowing down and reforming the public sector were " keystones of economic reform" and argued that privatisation of state assets would bring both these about.

He said the UK model could be exported, with adaptations to help stimulate a more competitive industrial economy. Privatisation is at present seen as the litmus test of economic policy in South Africa and in that respect Pretoria has got off to a shaky start. A 30 per cent stake is up for offer in the giant telecom-

Monsoon delays float as Sycamore gums up works

Ian King

CONFUSION reigned last night after Monsoon, the high street fashion retailer, was forced to postpone its £250 million flotation after a "disagreement" between BZW, its financial advisor, and Monsoon's biggest shareholder.

In a terse three-line statement, Monsoon — which was due to come to market later this summer — said it, BZW and its major shareholder had been "unable to agree certain issues between them".

The announcement was immediately followed by speculation that there had been a disagreement on the pricing of the issue, which would have more than doubled the £85 million fortune of Monsoon founder Peter Simon.

Sycamore, the Maltese-based offshore investment trust which owns 67 per cent of Monsoon, was prepared to sell down part of its holding.

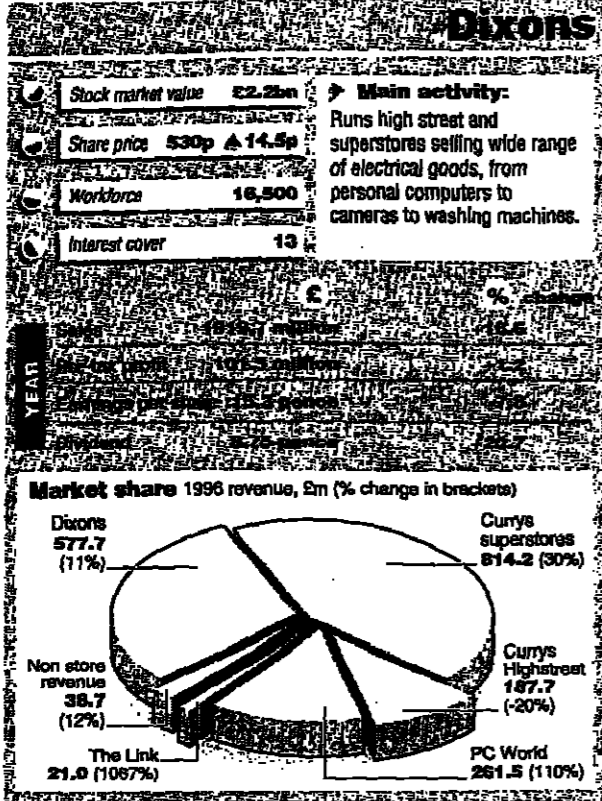
Sycamore, which became the biggest shareholder in Monsoon when Mr Simon sold it a stake in the early 1990s, is believed to have wanted a higher price for its shares than City institutions were prepared to pay.

Last night, sources close to Monsoon indicated that the company had not been involved in the dispute and referred all callers to BZW, which refused to comment. No new money was being raised for Monsoon from the issue. The postponement of the issue is the second time in recent years that Monsoon — which Mr Simon started from a market stall in London's Portobello Road in 1973 — has come close to a flotation only to decide against it.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Australia 1.8850 | France 7.7350 | Italy 2.328 | Singapore 2.175 |
| Austria 16.12 | Germany 2.295 | Malta 0.548 | South Africa 6.51 |
| Belgium 19.05 | Greece 363.00 | Netherlands 2.5750 | Spain 192.75 |
| Canada 2.5875 | Hong Kong 11.66 | New Zealand 2.19 | Sweden 12.19 |
| Cyprus 0.7045 | India 54.61 | Norway 9.85 | Switzerland 1.89 |
| Denmark 8.67 | Ireland 0.8450 | Portugal 237.00 | Turkey 123.754 |
| Finland 7.1550 | Israel 4.92 | Saudi Arabia 5.78 | USA 1.5125 |

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli sheqel)



Boom in computer sales lifts Dixons

Outlook/ Pauline Springett says the high street retailer reports margins remain firm as consumers return

THE current boom in personal computer sales has lifted Dixons' retail operating profit by 36 per cent to £215 million. The headline figures were slightly muddled by an exceptional charge of \$38.7 million relating to the group's investment in the US electrical discount Freeter. But the group had warned earlier this year that the write-off was on the cards. Freeter bought Dixons' US operation Silo in 1993 in exchange for a preference shareholding. But the former Dixons business has since been put into the American equivalent of administration. That hiccup aside, the figures were much as the market expected and the shares rose on the back of an upbeat statement from chairman Sir Stanley Kalms.



Improving picture... Upbeat statement from Sir Stanley Kalms PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

“Retail sales for the first 10 weeks are 30 per cent ahead overall and 12 per cent like for like and margins remain firm. Against the background of improving consumer confidence, the outlook for the financial year is promising,” he said. The group has 350 eponymous stores, which produced a 9 per cent increase on the year. The headline figures were slightly muddled by an exceptional charge of \$38.7 million relating to the group's investment in the US electrical discount Freeter. But the group had warned earlier this year that the write-off was on the cards. Freeter bought Dixons' US operation Silo in 1993 in exchange for a preference shareholding. But the former Dixons business has since been put into the American equivalent of administration. That hiccup aside, the figures were much as the market expected and the shares rose on the back of an upbeat statement from chairman Sir Stanley Kalms.

Firms invest £63m in deal to create 300 UK jobs

Unipart builds on Honda connection

CAR parts company Unipart strengthened its ties with Japanese car manufacturer Honda yesterday when it announced that the two companies were to invest £63 million in three joint ventures, creating more than 300 new jobs in Coventry and Kent, as well as pay for a new plant in Coventry.

With Kautex Unipart will build a second new plant in Coventry to make plastic parts, creating 125 jobs. Mr Neill said the group would have liked to invest in Oxford, close to its main operations, and it was a source of regret that the local authority had not tried harder to win the investments.

Unipart Yachiyo Technology, a joint venture with the Japanese firm Yachiyo Industry, will make steel parts for car bodies and sunroof assemblies in Coventry, creating 150 jobs.

Unipart Yanagawa Engineering will make gearbox components at Paddock Wood, creating 64 new jobs. Mr Neill said the companies would draw on Japanese technology to win further business in Europe. He said Honda had already been very patient in teaching Unipart companies how to manufacture.

Trade and industry secretary Ian Lang welcomed the announcement. He said it demonstrated Honda's commitment to manufacturing in the UK.

Share plan firms up BSkyB's German deal

KIRCH, the German media group, plans to take a stake in BSkyB to cement the digital TV collaboration unveiled by the two groups earlier this week. The disclosure helped BSkyB shares rise by another 5p to 473p — a level at which it will cost Kirch £82 million to buy just 1 per cent of the company. But Kirch said it was confident of support for the move from BSkyB, which will be taking a holding of up to 49 per cent in DF1, the German group's digital pay-TV business.

BSkyB is also expected to buy a 25 per cent holding in Kirch's sports channel that recently secured the rights to broadcast World Cup football in 2002 and 2006.

Analysts said it was unclear from where Kirch would acquire shares in BSkyB — only a fifth of the company's shares are traded on the market and the stock is regarded as illiquid.

Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation owns 49 per cent but is unlikely to accept a dilution of this as BSkyB plays such a strategic role in its global broadcasting operations. Although Granada, with an 11 per cent holding, has been seen as a seller, the company has recently stressed its long-term commitment to the stock.

Indirect shareholdings, such as that held by Pearson, are thought to be difficult to sell, although a capital raising share issue could provide Kirch with an entrée.

DF1 is hurtling towards a launch date of July 28, when it plans to start broadcasting 17 digital channels in Germany, but the success of the lift-off is being hampered by the lack of availability of decoding equipment.

Although Germany is Europe's largest TV market, the Kirch/BSkyB venture will not find it plain sailing. Kirch has predicted DF1 will break even within about four years but market analysts believe it could take twice as long.

German viewers already have a choice of about 20 channels and the decoder box, which will be needed to receive DF1's programmes, will be expensive. Questions are being raised about the appetite of German households for more pay channels.

The venture — into which Kirch has already poured about £4 billion — will also have to see off competition from the large German media group, Bertelsmann, which has just cemented a digital pay-TV collaboration with CLT of Luxembourg. The possibility of another, better, decoder box arriving on the market from Bertelsmann could deter consumers from signing up for the early days of DF1's new digital services.

But BSkyB and Kirch have among the best European programme libraries — a strength that has been successfully exploited by the British company to establish pay-TV in the UK, which now boasts more than 3 million subscribers.

Access to the potentially lucrative German market — with the possibility of extending collaboration into Spain and Italy — is a firm response to market worries that BSkyB could run out of earnings steam in the UK where its own digital services are planned for late next year.

Underside

Dan Atkinson

TERRY Smith, now "analyst without portfolio" at brokers Collins Stewart and, famously, fired by UBS in 1992 for flogging top corporate clients in the first edition of Accounting for Growth, awaits reader reaction to the second edition to be published on Monday.

Lest anyone have Terry down as just another City stripe-shirt who couldn't run a real business for tiffin, let them examine his hiterto unreported role in the downfall of the Pentos group. Terry bought three franchises of the Athens poster chain with an option entitling him to sell them back to Pentos. In summer 1994, troubled Pentos announced a rescue rights issue, and Terry promptly executed the option. The group hummed and hayed for a few months, and tried to give him equity, but Terry finally extracted his money in November 1994.

The following month, Athens went into receivership, proving Terry's trouble-spotting skills had triumphed again.

ALL change at the once-staid British Bankers' Association, whose new head of communications, Roger Miles, declares that his approach aims "to make us just a little bit more transparent and accountable". Roger admits the association has previously not enjoyed a "fantastic reputation" for dealing with the media. Quite what the BBA old guard will make of this is unclear.

IT DIDN'T take long for Grand Metropolitan, the junk food and alcohol giant that owns Burger King and J & B whisky, to shrug off the down-to-earth legacy of former chairman Ken Livingstone sound-alike Lord Sheppard. The group's palatial new HQ may be located, mundanely enough, off Oxford Street,



Call to swap pension lump sums for unlimited tax relief

APENSIONS think-tank has called on the Government to abolish the right to a tax-free lump sum on retirement in exchange for unlimited tax relief for pensions.

The working group of consumer and pension experts, headed by former security department permanent secretary Sir Michael Partridge, yesterday urged the removal of all restrictions on pensions tax relief to encourage more private savings. He said this would cater for a new reality.

Sir Michael said: "The existing pensions framework was crafted to meet the needs of a world which no longer exists.

"We now retire in middle age, with reasonable expectations of two or more decades of active life."

The group's report, Pensions for All, outlined plans for a simple Personal Retirement Fund. It could operate like a building society pass book, in which investors could see at a glance what their pension was worth.

The report suggested that the Personal Retirement Fund could run either in tandem with a company pension scheme or as the sole private pension of those without access to an occupational scheme. It would not be subject to the complex tax and benefit rules which restrict pension products.

All adults in Britain should be free to receive tax relief on all investments into the fund towards their pension funds. Or if that scheme proved too radical, the report calls for all adults, irrespective of their working status, to be allowed to invest either £8,000 tax free annually into a pension, or £250,000 over their lifetime.

The group concluded that the "popular" tax-free lump sum was an anachronism,

News in brief

- Shell and Exxon merge additives**
SHELL and Exxon yesterday unveiled plans to merge their worldwide petrol additives businesses in a venture that will account for 25 per cent of a global market estimated to be worth at least \$6 billion (£4 billion) annually.
The additives market is growing as engines become more complex and environmental requirements tighter. The merger will allow both companies to save money on research and manufacturing. — Patrick Donovan
- Vodafone action fails**
ORANGE yesterday saw off a High Court action from its rival mobile phones operator, Vodafone, which had accused it of malicious falsehood and infringement of trademark during an advertising campaign last autumn.
In the campaign, Orange claimed that its users saved an average of £20 a month compared with Vodafone's tariff at the time. Changes to Vodafone's charges have eliminated the headline savings, but the High Court still dismissed the charges and said it was "preposterous" to have alleged perjury against three Orange witnesses. — Lesl Buckingham
- Gambling on bright side**
STANLEY Leisure, the betting shops and casinos group, said yesterday's general election had been a success for its scratchcards, launched last year, to more traditional forms of betting.
Announcing a dip in full-year pre-tax profits, from £17 million to £14.8 million, founder and chairman Leonard Steinberg said Stanley's betting shops had been hit by scratchcards but that trading was much brighter now. He said Stanley had also been helped by recent changes in the law allowing fruit machines in betting shops and extra gaming machines in casinos. — Ian King
- Drinks group's profits flat**
SHARES of Matthew Clark, the drinks group which last year bought Taunton Cider for £275 million, slid 17p to 743p yesterday after the company reported lower than expected full-year pre-tax profits of £42.3 million.
Although the profits were almost double last year's figure of £21.4 million, the City had been expecting a higher number, and marked the shares down accordingly. Announcing the results, Matthew Clark's chief executive, Peter Alkoms, said the company, which a year earlier snapped up Gaymers Cider, had now completed rationalising the two acquisitions. — Ian King
- Publisher's £100,000 pay-off**
PUBLISHING company Highbury House, formerly Harrington Kilbride, said yesterday it had awarded Kevin Harrington, its ousted founder, £100,000 compensation. Mr Harrington left the company last summer after it had suffered a series of losses, was forced to restate its annual accounts several times and brought a libel case against a national newspaper.
Mr Harrington's final salary was £94,000, which with bonuses brought his total package to £177,000 in a year in which the group ran up pre-tax losses of £2 million. Highbury House shares closed up 4p at 24p. — Ian King

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- Up to 39 hours standby-time
- Up to 170 mins talk-time
- Data compatible
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June Rich return in Jul Stake

Redcar run

...and more...

Racing
June's Rich return in July Stakes

Chris Hawkins

RICH Ground, a 40-1 shot, produced a mind-boggling performance at Newmarket yesterday to become the longest priced winner in the 210-year history of the July Stakes.



Rich pickings... John Reid drives home the grey Rich Ground to a surprise win at Newmarket yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARNON

front was suicidal and came through with a clear run on the outside to beat Juwui by a head with Air Express the same distance away third.

Things were a lot lighter on the rails and Juwui, Air Express and Check The Band (fifth) all came close together.

The result leaves the form of the two-year-old colts up in the air but the Irish-trained Vergias, the Coventry Stakes winner, has yet to do anything wrong and is officially top-rated.

Dazzle, Tuesday's easy Cherry Hinton winner, is on the same mark of 114 as Vergias but comes out best when the fillies' allowance is taken into account.

Punters hit by the Rich Ground shock were able to get something back when Sensation, the 10-11 favourite, streaked home in the Fal-

mouth Stakes. This filly came over from France with a good reputation and lived up to her name to take her unbeaten run to four.

Criquette Head, training her first winner on the July course, said: "She's like most women in that she likes to take her time and won't be hassled. She was too backward to run at two but now she's flying and we might take her to Deauville for one of the big races."

Rugby League
Brotherly love takes a back seat at Bulls

Paul Fitzpatrick on the meeting of Pauls in tomorrow's Wigan showdown

THERE will be no love lost between Robbie and Henry Paul when the Bradford Bulls meet Wigan in tomorrow night's Super League showdown.

previous meetings with Wigan, he has been in exceptional form this year and is now rated as good as, or better than, his brother. In April he won £10,000 when he became the first player to score a hat-trick in a Challenge Cup final, the defeat by St Helens. He also won the League Trophy for the game's outstanding player and became the youngest captain of a final side.

Newmarket with form for the TV races

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Includes Channel 4 and 2.05 WEATHERS SUPERFATIVES STAKES SYDNEY 21/25/28.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Includes Channel 4 and 3.40 DARLEY JULY CUP OF £20,000.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Includes Channel 4 and 2.35 BARRAN TROPHY STAKES SYDNEY 21/25/28.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Includes Channel 4 and 4.10 LADENBURGH HURRICANE CUP HANDICAP SYDNEY 21/25/28.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Includes Channel 4 and 3.05 BARRAN TROPHY STAKES SYDNEY 21/25/28.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Includes Channel 4 and 4.45 DEFENCE SPARK PLUGS BUREAU STAKES SYDNEY 21/25/28.

Redcar runners and riders tonight

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Includes 6.45 WYNDHAM'S MAJORAN AUCTION STAKES SYDNEY 21/25/28.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Includes 7.15 BRADSHAW HILL MAJORAN STAKES SYDNEY 21/25/28.

Wolverhampton all-weather card

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Includes 2.20 Esherby Park, 2.50 Esherby, 3.25 Redmill.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Includes 3.55 ALMO CIVIL ENGINEERING HANDICAP SYDNEY 21/25/28.

Chepstow evening programme

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Includes 6.30 Chepstow, 7.00 Chepstow, 7.30 Chepstow.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Time. Includes 7.00 FLORIN DE LYS MAJORAN STAKES SYDNEY 21/25/28.

Soccer

Barcelona make play for Ginola

Michael Walker

THE influx of foreign talent that has seen Gianluca Vialli, Roberto Di Matteo and Fabrizio Ravaneli arrive over the past few weeks looks set for its first significant reversal with David Ginola poised for a \$4 million move to Bobby Robson's Barcelona...

son when Newcastle finished runners-up to Manchester United. He pointed out that he had signed a four-year contract and would be returning to St James' Park... "We finished second this time. Next time we will be first," he said.

Another Ginola adviser Marc Roger added to the mystery by claiming that Barcelona's directors "all wanted whom they described as their 'unanimous' choice."

Lee aims to make City slicker in shake-up at Maine Road

Derek Potter

MANCHESTER CITY, relegated from the Premiership in May, will begin First Division life with a restructured board following sweeping changes engineered by the club's chairman Francis Lee...

disciplinary committee: Sir David Hill-Wood, chairman of the finance committee; Dave Richards, chairman of Sheffield Wednesday; and Keith Wiseman, vice-chairman of Southampton...

Golf

Carnoustie kind to Montgomerie

David Davies at Carnoustie

AS Colin Montgomerie was talking in the media after a yesterday a wind-driven rope slipped suddenly, and exceedingly loudly, against the canvas side. Everyone jumped. Montgomerie merely smiled.

of 20 minutes - that's a long time for me - and he just took time to hit it, to make a positive pass at the ball. He'd been steering it a bit... "Tell it not in Troom, where his father Jim is secretary at another Open Championship role course, but Montgomerie said: 'Carnoustie is as good as any. If not the best of the lot. It is the best links I have ever witnessed.'"

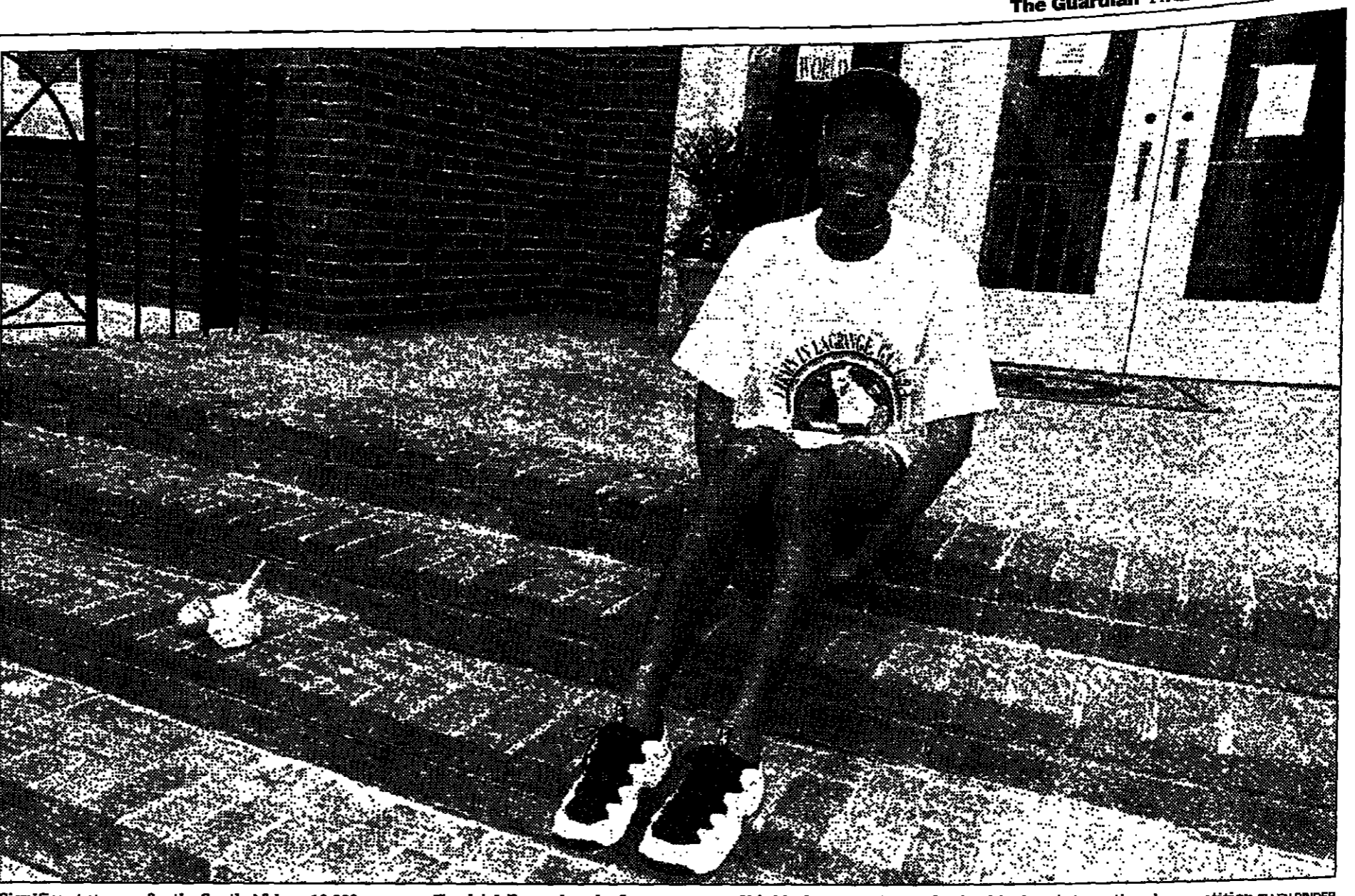
Athletics

New South Africa goes deep south

Ian Katz

THIS elegant former cotton town, south-west of Atlanta occupies an inglorious spot in the history of American race relations. So determined were its white residents to keep their slaves that every last man is said to have left home to fight for the Confederacy...

In recent weeks the stately neo-Colonial campus of the town's little Methodist college has been transformed into a virtual Olympic village, with more than 500 athletes from 33 countries joining the 40 or so resident athletes preparing for the Atlanta Games.



Significant step... for the South African 10,000m runner Hendrick Ramaala, who foresees many of his black compatriots following him into international competition

New South Africa goes deep south

In the second of his pre-Olympic reports Ian Katz finds South Africa's first official multi-racial team training in La Grange, a Georgia town once a bastion of slavery



"There's a lot of pressure," says Hendrick Ramaala, a 24-year-old runner competing in the 10,000m. "People back home want medals..."

Rugby Union

Bishop makes his final moves to ensure England has a part in future Five Nations

Robert Armstrong

AS Bill Bishop ends his term of office as president of the Rugby Football Union, he has been looking in retrospect at his Welsh counterpart Sir Tarkenton...

Baseball

Major League All-Star game

THE 70th annual Major League Baseball All-Star Game will be played at the new Yankee Stadium in New York City...

Chess

World Championship

THE 36-year-old modern pentathlete Claudi Cloutis provides another glimmer of encouragement for those disappointed by the pace of integrated sport...

Results

10,000m: F. G. G. (S) 40:20.5. P. D. (S) 40:44.2. J. M. (S) 40:50.3. Soccer: A. F. (C) 1:58.21. Soccer: A. F. (C) 1:58.21. Soccer: A. F. (C) 1:58.21...

Greece orders its basketball team to return

GREEK politicians called for their Olympic basketball team to be recalled from Atlanta yesterday after some players allegedly became involved in a fight with police...

Carling critical of Sky deal in TV interview

IAN MAFIN WILL CARLING has criticised Twickenham's recent TV agreement with BSkyB, a deal which has threatened the Five Nations Championship...

A vertical advertisement for Knight's Edge, featuring a man in a suit and the text 'Knight's Edge' and 'Derby win by a nose'.

NATWEST TROPHY: SECOND ROUND

Derbyshire v Kent Derby win by a nose

Derbyshire finally won by two wickets with four balls to spare but only after appearing to reject Kent's gift-wrapped offering as if it were one of those eccentric Christmas presents from a dotty aunt.



Clean through... Peter Martin bowls Rob Bailey, one of his four Northamptonshire wickets at Old Trafford yesterday

Lancashire v Northamptonshire

Martin finds way out of reverse

LANCASHIRE, past masters at conjuring one-day wins from unlikely situations, tried the same in reverse yesterday.

With this Northants side, under their new player-coach John Emburey, are made of stern stuff.

At that point Emburey, who had contributed 46 to a NatWest record eighth-wicket stand in the pavilion, having a cut knee bandaged after bumping into Gallian just before the interval.

After that it was nip and tuck, with Watkinson and Lloyd tilting the balance Lancashire's way in a stand of 42 in five overs before both bled out to Montgomery at deep midwicket off Emburey.

The 43-year-old ended with three for his 12 overs and there were also three wickets for Curran, while Ambrose claimed one for 21.

Smith puts Hick in the shade as Hampshire storm into last eight

ROBIN SMITH, ignored by England this summer, scored a marvellous 158 as Hampshire booked their place in the NatWest quarter-finals with an equally emphatic 125-run over Worcestershire at New Road, Graeme Hick, his England place under threat, was out for a duck.

and two sixes as Hampshire raced to 328 for six in their 60 overs. Hick lasted only six balls before being trapped leg before in an inspired spell by Kevan James as Worcestershire were dismissed for 203.

powered their way to 361 for seven, their highest ever score against first-class opposition. It helped beat Durham by 67 runs.

seamer, gave the England selector Graham Gooch a nudge by having the opener caught for a duck.

ing resistance against an attack encouraged by early moisture in the pitch and which bowled efficiently, notably Gough, who made light of a debilitating virus.

Warwickshire v Surrey

Knight's moment of anguish

David Foot at Edgbaston

WARWICKSHIRE'S sneaky hopes of retaining the trophy and their habit of Lord's finals evaporated in two crucial early-evening overs and, for Nick Knight at least, a moment of visible disbelief.

to Martin Bicknell, tall and some would claim not the most coordinated member of this agile, upbeat Surrey side.

breath Brown was bowled. Lewis finished with three for 33; but wickets of three were shared by Hollis, Benjamin and Julian.

David Hopps at Huddersley

YORKSHIRE'S revival continues to rising momentum — and that is only the pigeons. Long before Middlesex were vanquished by seven wickets with 16 overs to spare, every attacking shot was marked by a celebratory fly-past of more than 50.

Yorkshire, determined to address the problem before next month's Test against Pakistan, have been informed by the council that poisoning is illegal, but shooting is not. In that case they should equip David Byas and Michael Bevan with shotguns. On the evidence of their batting they would never miss.

Yorkshire v Middlesex Byas and Bevan are executioners for the day as Weekes' efforts prove to be in vain

Scoreboard

Table with columns for NatWest Trophy, Second round, and various cricket statistics including runs, wickets, and overs.

Table with columns for Lancashire v Northamptonshire, and various cricket statistics including runs, wickets, and overs.

Table with columns for Derbyshire v Kent, and various cricket statistics including runs, wickets, and overs.

Table with columns for Essex v Durham, and various cricket statistics including runs, wickets, and overs.

Table with columns for Warwickshire v Surrey, and various cricket statistics including runs, wickets, and overs.

Table with columns for Yorkshire v Middlesex, and various cricket statistics including runs, wickets, and overs.

Table with columns for South XI Championship, and various cricket statistics including runs, wickets, and overs.

Table with columns for NatWest Trophy, and various cricket statistics including runs, wickets, and overs.



Without the right help David Gower might have ended up in court.

Well, that's where David Gower was heading as a law student until somebody spotted a spark of talent. By supporting the Development of Excellence programme, NatWest is helping to identify, coach and develop today's bright young hopefuls, giving them the same chance to shine. Great news for English cricket, not so good for the opposition.



Ground moves at Newmarket, page 13
Ian Katz on the Road to Atlanta, page 14

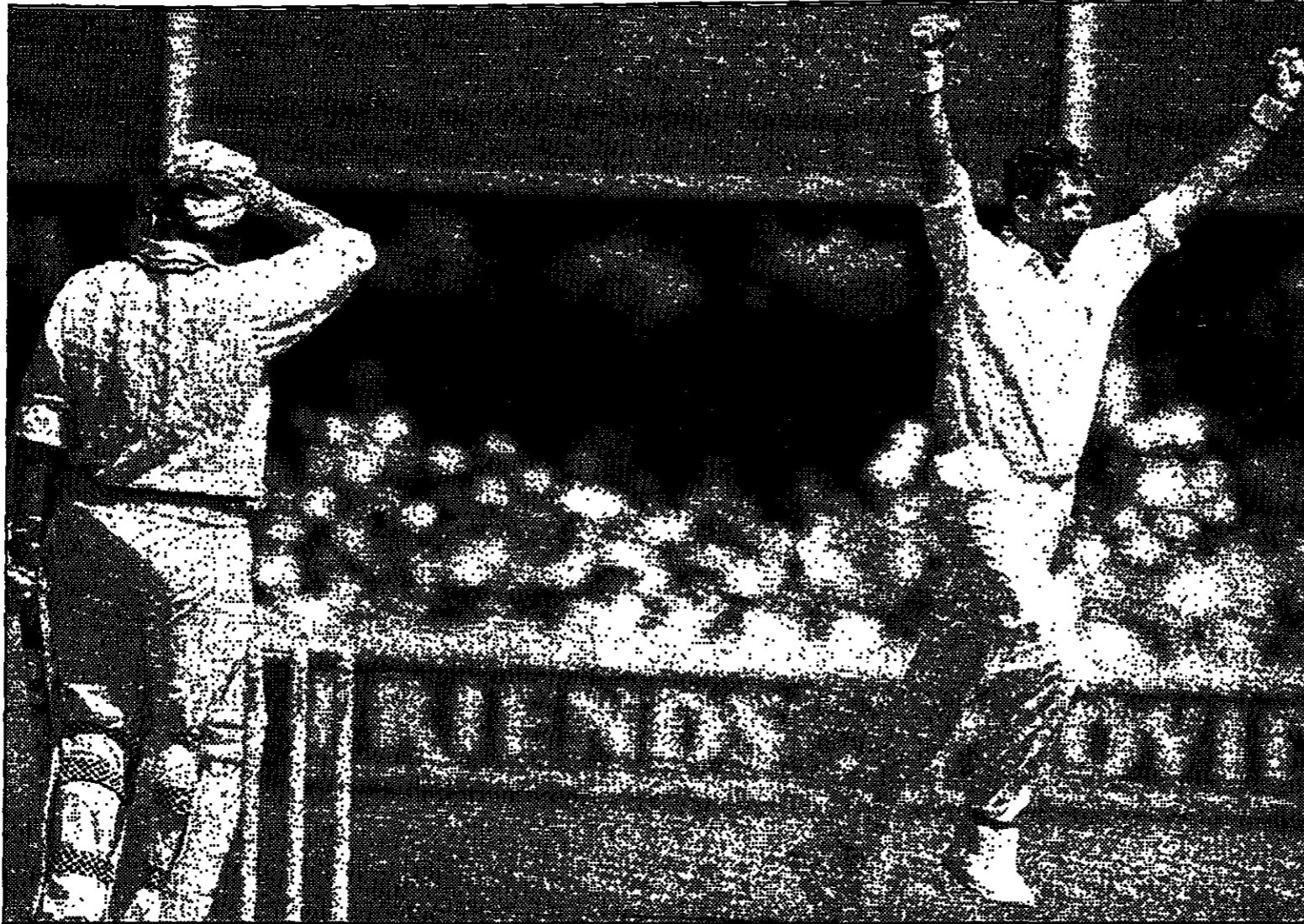
Ginola heading for Barcelona, page 14
Lancashire win Lord's rehearsal, page 15

Sports Guardian

SOMERSET SALUTE NATWEST HAT—TRICK

Caddick top gun in wild west shoot-out

THE summer made a belated appearance in the NatWest Trophy yesterday and nowhere did the sun shine more brightly than at Taunton where Andrew Caddick banked a hat-trick. Somerset eventually cruised into the quarter-finals with a five-wicket victory after hustling Gloucestershire out before lunch for 118, but a win had seemed unlikely as the visitors plundered 74 runs from the first 11 overs. Caddick conceded 37 off 34 deliveries but Andy Hayhurst refused to be downhearted. "The skipper kept geeing me up, saying the next two or three overs could be the match-winning ones," Caddick said, and so it came to pass. Caddick sent back Monte Lynch and Andrew Symonds before completing Somerset's first hat-trick in the competition by dismissing Rob Cunniffe.



Third degree... the former England pacesman Andrew Caddick celebrates his hat-trick with the dismissal of Rob Cunniffe yesterday. CLIVE MASON

High time for spear-carriers of summer



Frank Keating

THE banner headline distractions of Euro soccer and young Hen's tennis party at Wimbledon meant the domestic cricket season reached its halfway point this week with only summer's obsessives and avid sportswatchers bothering to notice. Cricket now has about a dozen days to strut its uninterrupted pastoral stuff before Atlanta's sweltering shenanigans returns it to its cosy unnoticed vacuum.

But, bless its white cotton socks, the next seven days represent a mid-term break and a full county championship programme does not resume until next Thursday. It gives time at least to catch up on the details—and blink a few double-takes. Like who, for goodness sake, is S Lee, top of the batting averages at a Bradmanesque 97 per innings? Likewise S P Titchard, who is eighth? Who he? There are, nicely, five native and five overseas players in the top 10 of both the batting and bowling averages—but in the latter list who, pray, are A J Harris and J D Lewry?

Once you learn that Lee's christian name is Shane you know the truth of it. Yep, born Wollongong NSW, 23 years ago. An entranced Somerset gave him his county cap only yesterday. He is on a one-summer contract, deputising for the Pakistani twerker Mushaq Ahmed. Another graduate of the Australian Cricket Academy? No. Lee turned down that offered scholarship to continue his degree at a proper university—in psychology. Where do they find them?

In contrast Titchard is a homegrown genuine journeyman, 29 next birthday, who has been a long time threatening to break into Lancashire's top rank since posting a string of double-centuries as a schoolboy 10 years ago. It is nice to see him up there in the A Warhol XI.

Andrew Harris, however, has burst with brisk promise to announce himself as yet another foil for Derbyshire's glorious Devon while Sussex's leftie Jason Lewry has simply continued his acclaimed nip of last season after being "discovered" at 23 playing village cricket for Goring and work-

ing as a storeroom manager for a wholesale electricians in Chichester. Never mind where we find them. England certainly needs some sparky wicket-taking bowlers. Things are getting desperate. Diverted by the passing pageant of other sports, it has been easy not to notice Kent's progress. Last season they were bottom of the championship. Now they are top, followed by last summer's non-descript middle-order makeweights, Yorkshire, Leicestershire and Surrey. What has been going on? With the nation concentratedly wallowing in the soccer and tennis, at least cricket got one ear in, and even the most obsessively devout and blinkered enclosed-nun in the land could not have escaped hearing the name Dickie Bird this midsummer. What a comic opera that was, e both gum, tears on tap an' all.

THE potty palaver was summed up best by a mate who also sits on top of this very column occasionally (and with lordly but allowable singularity initials his cheery simply "ME"). For the Lord's Taverners' dinner on the eve of the second Test he found himself unusually early. In fact, he was only the second to arrive. Umpire Bird, it goes without saying, was the first, alone and not drinking in the empty bar.

"Hello, Dickie, what are you having?" he greeted the legendary adjudicator. "Tell me, it can't be true, can it, that I've heard the very faintest of ridiculous rumours that tomorrow at Lord's you're standing in your final Test match? If it was, then you are far too modest an old stick, much too much of a demure and shirking violet for keeping so quiet about it, not letting anyone know. If I had believed such rubbishy tales, I'd have had a little more of a tattle I'd have rung you up to do a couple of pairs in my Guardian column, just to acknowledge your retirement. But there's not a word of truth in the wild and silly rumours, is there?"

Dickie's eyes spun in their sockets, his breast palpitating behind the National Grid blazer badge. You could hear the ticking of the clock but not as loudly as the gears clanking around in the great man's mind. Was it a wind-up? The excruciating dilemma lasted for only a handful of seconds before the famous umpire again guessed right and twiggled the mischievous Engel was ribbing the legendary white-coated self-promoted showman from Barsley. For the last time, Dickie—thanks for the memory.

Christie back in the frame

Duncan Mackay

JUST SIXTEEN days before he was due to start the defence of his Olympic 100 metres title, Linford Christie was beaten by the world champion Donovan Bailey in an exciting finish which needed a

photograph to sort out at the Grand Prix meeting in Nice last night. Bailey recovered from his poor start to catch Christie, who was out of his blocks like a bullet. In the last few strides and win as both men recorded 10.17sec. No love is lost between the two after Bailey accused Christie of faking injury in Gothenburg last year. The Canadian's delight was clear, but no sooner had he punched the air in triumph than he was clutching his right groin in agony. The British team captain will race once more, in the 100m against a low-key field at Crystal Palace tomorrow, before leaving for Atlanta.

Sonia O'Sullivan won the 3000m in 8min 35.43sec, the fastest in the world this season. It was the ideal warm-up for the Irishwoman who plans to attack the world 5000m record at Crystal Palace if the weather is okay. The defending Olympic champion Hassiba Boulmerka finished only seventh

in the 1500m and must now be regretting her strange decision to continue training in Cuba and Germany rather than race on the European Grand Prix circuit. The field went past the Algerian as Portugal's Caria Sacramento ran a perfectly judged race to burst from the pack down the back straight to take the honours in a personal-best 4min 02.64sec. In the women's 800m, the world champion Ana Quirot of Cuba won in 1min 59.21sec with Britain's Diane Modahl fourth in 2.00.27. White Modahl has fought back from a flawed drug test that threatened to taint her forever. Quirot has overcome an even bigger obstacle. She has made a miraculous comeback from a 1993 fire that took the life of her unborn child and nearly her own. "I may look calm, but inside I'm a little restless," Quirot said. "The whole world wants me to win." The victories of Joseph Keter in the 3,000m steeplechase in 8.08.47, and Paul Bi-

tok in the 3,000m in 7.32.05 may cost them places in Kenya's team for Atlanta. They are two of 30 runners, including the world champion and world record holder Moses Kiptanui, who have been threatened with de-selection because they failed a vitaminium to join the rest of their team-mates at a pre-Olympic training camp in Mississippi yesterday. Torrance Zellner, who will miss the Olympics because he finished only fifth in the US trials, pulled off the biggest surprise of the evening when he beat the world No. 1 Samuel Matete of Zambia in the 400m hurdles in a new personal best time of 48.24, despite clattering the last barrier. He will watch Atlanta with intense frustration.

Paula Thomas yesterday pulled out of Britain's Olympic team as they were departing for Atlanta. The 30-year-old sprinter from Salford, who was in the 4 x 100m relay, has not fully recovered from an operation to remove her appendix and right ovary.

Phone lines are open 8am-8pm Mon-Fri and 10am-2pm Saturday. Issued by Midland Bank plc.



Meet Vanessa.

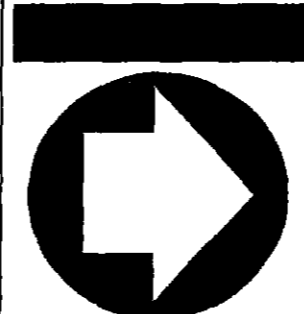
Vanessa's just insured the contents of her home for £10.20 a month.

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Vanessa's just bought her first home. When she realised that she needed contents insurance, she rang Midland and got some good advice about the level of cover that was right for her. We also gave her an extremely competitive quote, which must have sounded good to Vanessa, because she accepted it. If you've got a house that needs insuring, why not call us now on 0800 277 377 for a free quotation? And remember a copy of the policy document, giving full details of cover, is available on request.



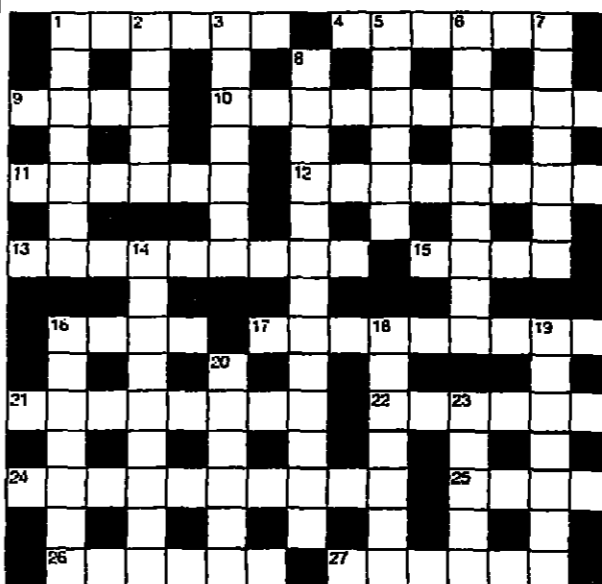
277 0800



If it is true that you judge a man by his enemies then I am glad to have chosen Michael Portillo, the defence secretary, as the first target of one of our "Paparazzi Cameras". Nick Rosen

Online on page 15

Guardian Crossword No 20,702 Set by Rufus

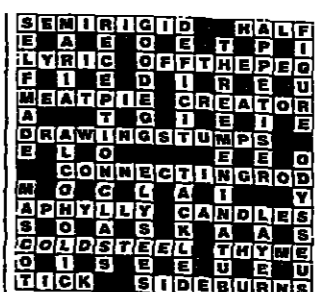


Across

- 1 Oxford accent (6)
- 4 Interrupt to add one's contribution (4,2)
- 9 Uninteresting piece of scenery (4)
- 10 They're sharp, mind, on the cuffs (10)
- 11 Staggering along to a country in Africa (6)
- 12 A check on the present demand for bread (4-4)
- 13 Stock-holder (6,3)
- 15 Appreciates one's accommodation (4)
- 16 The band plays a short piece (4)
- 17 Carried shoulder-high by old soldiers on promotion (5)
- 21 A resounding beating (8)
- 22 They act as substitutes in practice (9)

Down

- 1 Live with one girl or another (7)
- 2 Surpass all others as a swindler (5)
- 3 F Mugabe gives offence (7)
- 5 Held with an awkward grip (6)
- 6 Ban a professional writer (5)
- 7 Irritates by the unnecessary loss of a point (7)
- 8 Winged messenger (7-6)
- 14 River lighter may transfer the ashes (4,5)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,701

- 16 Fields of activity he gets a mixed press about (7)
- 18 Improves — one's bust line? (7)
- 19 Modify a painting technique (7)
- 20 Rope in another dramatist (6)
- 23 Passion fruit drink? (5)

Solution tomorrow

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day July
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